





THE

HISTORY AND ANTIQUITIES.

Ancient and Modern,

OF THE

BOROUGH OF READING.

IN THE COUNTY OF BERKS.

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JOHN MAN.

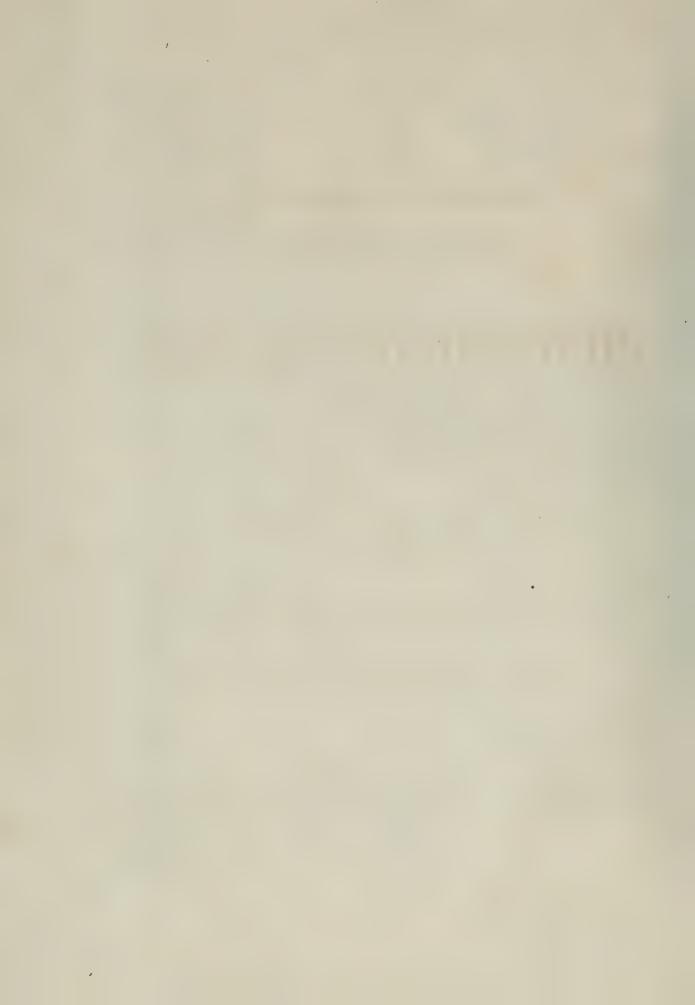
NON TAMEN PIGEBIT VEL INCONDITA VOCE MEMORIAM PRIORIS SERVITUTIS, AC TESTIMONIUM PRESENTIUM BONORUM COMPOSUISSE.—Tacitus Vita Agricola.

READING:

Printed by Enare and Man;

SOLD BY NICHOLS, SON, AND BENTLEY, RED LION PASSAGE, FLEET STREET; J. RICHARDSON, ROYAL EXCHANGE, LONDON; AND R. SNARE, MINSTER STREET, READING.

1816.



TO

THE WORSHIPFUL

THE MAYOR, ALDERMEN, BURGESSES,

AND

INHABITANTS,

OF

THE BOROUGH OF READING,

THIS WORK

IS

INSCRIBED

 \mathbf{BY}

THEIR

OBEDIENT SERVANT,

JOHN MAN.



PREFACE.

THE Author of the following sheets feels himself called upon to apologize to the public for thus intruding on their notice a subject that has already been treated on by Mr. Coates, in his History and Antiquities of Reading; but when the different arrangement of the present work, compared with his, is considered; and the variety of new and interesting subjects introduced in it, which were either unknown to, or omitted by that gentleman, some of which materially affect the interests of the inhabitants, he flatters himself he shall not be considered too presuming in submitting to their candor a work commenced long before that gentleman's appeared, and which has only been hitherto delayed through an apprehension that an earlier publication might have interfered with the sale of that work.

In making a selection from various manuscripts and ancient authors for the following History, the author may have omitted many circumstances which to others may appear of consequence to be known, which on the contrary, he may have inserted some which may appear in trifling for the subjects of history. To this he can only observe, that it is almost impossible for an author to satisfy the great variety of tastes of an enlightened public in literary subjects; for while the antiquary is delighted with the contemplation of mouldering walls and broken columns, the man of the world is equally pleased with tracing 'the manners living as they rise,' and bringing into view the habits of the people from the unpolished state of our barbarous ancestors, to the present refinement's of civilized society. Under this conviction, he has endeavored to vary

his selections as much as possible, consistent with the interest of the work, and has placed them under distinct heads or chapters, to render them as interesting as possible to the generality of readers.

In the historical part of the work, it may be thought that he has introduced too many petitions and addresses; but it should be considered that such things make up almost all the political interest of corporate towns, and though they may now be thought of insignificant value, yet should this work survive but a very few years, they may perhaps be read by the succeeding generation as matters of curiosity, if not of imitation.

The list of the members of parliament who have represented the borough from the commencement of the representative system; is taken from Brown Willis, as far as his list goes, with some few additions extracted from the Corporation Diaries, which are not to be found in the Rolls: particularly during the Protectorship, which he says 'he had purposely omitted for the credit of the nation;' but as this motive no longer exists, they are here inserted in their proper order.

For want of a regular list of mayors, he has been under the necessity of searching the Corporation Diaries, through every year from the first mayoralty in the year 1432 to nearly the present time, so that considering the great length of time from the era of their commencement, and the difficulty arising from the mayoralties always taking place in the last quarter of the year, whereby the same person sometimes appears to have served in two succeeding years, when in fact he had only officiated one, it is hoped it will be found as nearly accurate as possible.

To those gentlemen who have furnished the Author with original papers for the present work, he begs to return his sincere acknowledgments, particularly to the members of the Corporation for the readiness with which they permitted him to examine their original records, from which he has extracted the most valuable part of his work, and to William Andrews, esq. town clerk, for his condescending attendance while examining the various records in his possession. His best thanks are

also due to Jonathan Tanner, esq. for the loan of some original documents; and he feels equally obliged to his friend Mr. Williams for much useful information on subjects of a later date.

In a work which embraces so many subjects, some errors or inadvertencies may possibly have arisen without any intention on the part of the author to mislead his readers; if any such should be discovered, he trusts they will meet with a candid interpretation from a generous public, especially when it is considered, that this is not the work of an author by profession, but the humble attempt of one whose only aim has been to give to his fellow townsmen a more detailed account of the various changes that have taken place in the government of the borough, and the rights they possess, than has hitherto appeared; and he has only to regret, that it has not been in his power to render it more worthy of their acceptance.

THE AUTHOR.

READING, Dec. 30, 1815.



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#### THE

# HISTORY AND ANTIQUITIES

OF

### R E A D I N G.

# History of Reading.

#### CHAPTER I.

PROVINCIAL towns have so seldom attracted the notice of our best historians, that very few authentic memorials have been handed down to posterity, even of our largest capitals. It will not, therefore, be considered extraordinary, if the following History of Reading should be deficient in many requisites for forming a correct idea, of the rise, and progress of its civilization, to its present improved state; or, if the few circumstances we have been able to collect, from the pages of history, or ancient records, should be little more than a catalogue of its misfortunes.

When a country is in a flourishing condition, its happiness seldom attracts the attention of the historian, but its distresses, and calamities, afford an ample field for the scope of his patience, abilities, and eloquence.

Whether Reading owes its origin to the Britons, the Romans, or the Saxons, is a question very difficult to be ascertained at this distant period; yet we may safely conclude, from the silence of our early historians, that it must have been very inconsiderable, if it existed at all, prior to the establishment of the latter in this island; under whose auspices, it formed a part of the kingdom of Wessex, towards the close of the fifth century. At this period, Cerdic, accompanied by his son, Kenric, with five ships, landing on the Sussex coast, at a place called Chardford, or Cerdic's Ford, made himself, master of the western coast, and gained several battles over the Britons, who

Снар. І.

CHAP. I. contended for the possession of their native soil with so much courage, that, although they were routed in several engagements, Cerdic was unable to push his conquests far beyond the sea-coast. His victories, however, by reducing the number of the Britons, paved the way for further conquests by his son Kenric, who subdued Salisbury, and extended his dominion as far as Benson in Oxfordshire; at which time it is reasonable to suppose, that this part of the country submitted also, to the authority of the conqueror.

From this period to the union of the Saxon Heptarchy, under Egbert, king of Wessex, it is likely that the Saxons held an undisturbed possession of the kingdom; the Britons being either expelled or subdued; and, except the quarrels that arose among petty kings for the sovereignty of England, and which were chiefly carried on in distant parts of the country, nothing of consequence, or of importance, occurred, for the space of nearly three hundred years, to prevent the inhabitants of Berkshire from cultivating the arts of peace, and of civilized life.

Notwithstanding these flattering appearances, the fate of the country remained yet undecided. A more daring and ferocious enemy, under the denomination of Danes, encouraged by the success of their precursors, began at this time to ravage the coast, from whence they afterwards made predatory excursions into the interior of the country; but, as plunder, rather than conquest, formed the most prominent feature of their warfare, they had no sooner freighted their ships with the spoils of the unfortunate inhabitants, than they returned to their homes, to enjoy the fruits of their courage, and rapacity.

The display of so much wealth, to a people just emerging from barbarism, was a bait too tempting to be resisted; the success therefore of these marauders, became a stimulus to other adventurers to pursue the same course. Piratical bodies issued from every part of the North, and the Saxons who had for a long time before enjoyed an uninterrupted series of success, were doomed in their turn, to become the victims of an invading foe.

Among the leaders of these Danish freebooters was Ivar, one of their piratical kings, who, encouraged by the feeble opposition he had met with from the inhabitants on former occasions, at length determined to attempt the subjugation of the whole kingdom. Having collected a formidable fleet, he sailed from Denmark in the year S68, and soon after landed at Southampton without meeting with any opposition. Leaving a garrison to secure that town, he marched with the remainder of his army into the interior, ravaging and burning every place he came to, from the sea to the Thames; and at length fixed on Reading for his head quarters, which he fortified, so as to resist any attack that could be made on it by the Saxons. Ivar was followed in 870 by another

829

533

871

party of his countrymen, more numerous than before, under the command of CHAP. I. Hinguar and Hubba; who, after having conquered the kingdom of the East Angles, and slain Edmund their king, marched to Reading, where, for their better security, they are said to have dug a deep trench from north to south, between the rivers Thames and Kennet.\* Three days after their arrival at Reading, a battle was fought at Englefield, between them and the English, commanded by Ethelwulph, earl of Berks; which was contested with equal obstinacy on both sides, 'till one of the Danish commanders, with a great part of his army, being killed, the remainder were put to flight, and victory declared in favor of the Saxons. After this engagement, the Danes retreated to Reading, whither they were pursued, by Ethered, and his brother Alfred; afterwards deservedly called, Alfred the Great: here a second battle was fought, more violent than the former; when the Danes, with the assistance of the garrison, which they had left in the town, making a sortie at the same instant, from every part of their lines, and falling upon the English, with an impetuosity not to be resisted, obliged the royal brothers to break up the siege, after an obstinate contest, in which many lives were lost on both sides, and to retreat towards Aston; where, being followed by the Danes, another sanguinary battle took place, in which the English were victorious, the Danes being again compelled to retreat with great loss. With such animosity did the two contending parties pursue each other, that these three engagements, are said to

\* It is, perhaps, difficult to determine, whether this trench was dug on the east, or west side, of the town, though I am inclined to think it was on the former, from considering the high ground between the two rivers on the west side, which must have rendered such a measure, almost impossible to have been executed, at least, sufficiently near the town, to have been of any use for defensive operations; while the eastern side, being a flat country, was very well adapted for the purpose. And, indeed, this opinion seems corroborated by the account given of the transaction by the ancient historian Hoveden, whose words are, "prædictus paganorum exercitus, occidentales Saxones adiens, Radingum venit, in meridiana Thamesis fluvii ripa, in illa plaga, quæ dicitur Bearocshyre, tertioque adventus die, duo comites eorum, cum magna multitudine, in prædam equitaverunt, aliis interim vallum facientibus, inter duo flumina, Tamesin et Cinetam, a dextra parte ejusdem regiæ villæ."

46 The aforesaid army of pagans, marching to the West Saxons, came to Reading, situated on the South side of the river Thames, in that part of the country called Berkshire, and on the third day after their arrival, two of their leaders, with a great multitude, rode out to forage, the others, in the mean time, digging a trench between the two rivers, the Thames and Kennet, on the right-hand side of the same regal town."

Here, we see, it was on the right-hand side of the town, that the trench was dug, which could be no other than the eastern, supposing a person to be looking towards the north, as is customary in laying down places on maps; I conceive, therefore, the trench here mentioned, could be no other than the Plummery Ditch, as it is now called, which actually unites the two rivers, and nearly insulates the Forbury, which it is more than probable, from its elevated situation, was the part the Danes fortified.

1 Rog. Hoveden.

CHAP. I. have taken place, in the space of seven days; and no less than nine pitched battles were fought within the year, with various success. In one of these, Ethelwulph, earl (comes) of Berks, lost his life; and, in another, Ethered himself received a mortal wound, of which he died soon after, and was, as some writers say, buried at Winbourn Minster in Dorsetshire, and the following inscription placed on his tomb:

> In hoc loco quiescit corpus sancti Etheldredi, regis West Saxonum, qui An. Dom. DCCCLXXIII, XXIII die Aprilis, per manus Danorum paganorum occubuit.

But the principal action, and that which for a time decided the fate of Reading, is said to have been fought at a place called Mcrantem,\* where the Saxons were defeated. From the great changes effected by time in the names of places, and the difficulty of ascertaining the derivation of the Latin appellatives, it is almost impossible to ascertain, with any degree of certainty, where this place really was. It might possibly be Moreton, in this county, which lies about fourteen miles distant, north from Reading, from whence one of the hundreds receives its name, and is in the neighbourhood of Aston, where one of these contests is acknowledged to have taken place. Or, if a conjecture might be hazarded, we are rather inclined to fix it at Mortimer; part of which is in this county, and not more than seven or eight miles from the scene of action. This supposition is strengthened by evident marks of an engagement having taken place on its extensive common, at some early period of our history: For, on the left hand of the road leading from Reading to Silchester, are the remains of a square encampment, the south side of which, forms the boundary line between the counties of Berks and Hants; and opposite to it are several tumuli or barrows, probably the burial places of some of the chiefs who fell in the engagement. Perhaps this battle was fought by Alfred, t who Alfred, succeeded his brother Ethered on the throne, about the year 873 or 874. However this may be, there can be no doubt, but this place, was the scene

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> Scala Chronica.

<sup>\*</sup> Some writers are of opinion, that by Merantem was meant Merton in Surrey; others, that it was Mertune in Oxfordshire, or Marden, in Wiltshire, but all these places are at too great a distance from the seat of action.

<sup>+</sup> This common has lately been enclosed, and all traces of the barrows will soon be obliterated by the plough.

<sup>‡</sup> We have been led to this conjecture from several traces which still exist in that neighbourhood: particularly a farm adjoining the spot, called Alfred's Farm, and another now united to it, called Danes' Acres, the property of Jeremiah Moore, esq. of Englefield. On this last, is a very ancient cottage, which, by a tradition among the inhabitants, is said to be of Danish construction. This opinion seems, in some measure, corroborated by the peculiar style of the building. It is about 30 feet long.

of some considerable engagement between the Saxons and Danes, and most CHAP. I. likely about the period here stated.

While this warfare was carrying on for the possession of this town, it is probable that many conflicts, not mentioned in history, took place in its more immediate neighbourhood; from one of which, Battel Farm\* might derive its name; unless it was so called, from having been given by the Conqueror, as part of the endowment of his newly erected abbey, at Battle, in Sussex. There are several appearances of entrenchments in the meadows belonging to this farm, most of which were undoubtedly thrown up during the contest between Charles and his parliament; but Comb Bank,† now part of the western boundary of the borough, is, from its Saxon appellation, evidently more ancient than the seventeenth century, and was, probably, one of those thrown up by the Danes at this period; the storming of which, and their subsequent defeat is alluded to in the following lines from the Cantio Cygni.

From hence; he little Chanseys seeth, and hasteneth for to see Fair Redinge towne, a place of name, where cloths ywoven bee. This shews our Alfred's victorie, what time Begsceg was slaine With other Danes, whose carcases lay trampled on the plain. And how the fields ydrenched were, with blood upon them shed Whereas the prince in stables now, hath standinge many a steede.

by 14 wide, built of timber, and evidently, in its original form, consisted solely of a ground floor; chambers having since been formed within the roof, which, together with the sides, is composed of ribs of oak timber, about two feet thick, and one wide, set upright in the ground, which, bending in the form of an obtuse angle, are united at the top. This building must originally have been thatched from the ground, upwards, representing the figure of the hull of a ship, with the keel inverted.—A view of this building is given in the tail-piece to this chapter.

\* It has been said by some, that it owed this name to the more recent contest in the reign of Charles the First, but this must be a mistake, as it was known by that appellation before that period. In a deed, penes me, dated 1620, the north side of Castle-street, is described to be in Battel part of the Manor of Battel;" we may, therefore, conclude, that it received this appellation from some earlier event, and as no other occurs, of a later date, in the annals of our history, I am inclined to fix it at this period.

+ Comb, (Saxon,) a valley between hills. Nothing can be more descriptive of the situation than this name; this valley being confined on the north, by Mapledurham hills, and on the south, by the elevated ground, on which the Bath road is carried, and which divides this valley, from that wherein the Kennet flows. Perhaps Comb Bank might have been the commencement of a fortified line from the Thames to the Kennet, though no appearances of it are to be traced beyond the mead, the rest having probably been obliterated by the plough, as the Latin word vallum, used by lloveden, does not exclusively mean a deep trench, but may be applied to a bank or rampart. The Thames and Kennet, therefore, might have been connected in this manner, as well as by the Plummery ditch, and thus the west side of the town be secured, as well as that on the east.

† The Thames. & Cholsey Leland.

CHAP. I. Alfred having at length obtained several advantages over the enemy, Ivar thought fit to make proposals for peace, which the king accepted on condition of his evacuating his dominions. In consequence of this treaty, the Danes marched to London, thereby freeing the inhabitants of Reading from the oppression and cruelties they had so long endured from a savage and barbarous foe, to whom no treaties were sacred, and under whose government neither the lives, nor the properties of the people were secure.

871

This tranquility was soon again interrupted by the arrival of a fresh body of these freebooters under the command of Halden, who, seizing the castle of Wareham in Dorsetshire, threatened the western parts of England with devastation and ruin. Alfred expostulated with this chief on his breach of a solemn treaty made with Ivar, and was answered, that each of these bodies of adventurers being under an independent chieftain, they were not bound by any compact made by Ivar.

Alfred, relying on the peace which he had made, found himself unprepared for this unexpected attack; however, seeing the necessity of immediately opposing force to force, with great exertions, he soon collected a numerous army, which so intimidated the invading enemy that they again sued for peace. The terms were accepted, and ratified in the most solemn manner, Alfred swearing to observe them by the relics of the saints, and Halden by his bracelet, both equally sacred in the opinion of the respective parties.

This peace, notwithstanding the solemn pledges by which it had been confirmed, was no better observed on the part of the Danes than the former had been: for landing again on several parts of the coast, they subjugated by degrees a great portion of the interior; and, it was not without many severe conflicts, and many reverses of fortune, that Alfred was at last enabled to secure to his western subjects the inestimable blessing of peace, by giving up the sovereignty of East Anglia to Guthrun, one of their chiefs, on his consenting to embrace christianity.

900

From this period to the death of Alfred, the country enjoyed a profound peace; but under the reigns of the succeeding Saxon monarchs, the contest for the empire was carried on by the Danes with incessant hostility; and, although many parts of the kingdom suffered dreadfully, yet Reading seems in a great measure to have escaped the general calamity, and even to have increased in consequence and population, till the year 1006, when Sweyn, king of Denmark, landed with a powerful army, and, marching through Hampshire, carried devastation and ruin into the interior of the country,

burning and destroying towns and villages in his march; and, at length CHAP. I. arriving at Reading, he reduced the town to ashes, together with Wallingford and Cholsey; at which time the beautiful monastery for nuns, at Reading, which is said to have been founded by Elfrida, widow of king Edgar, as an atonement for the death of Edward the martyr, whom she caused to be assassinated at the gate of Corfe Castle in Dorsetshire, while he was drinking a cup of wine to her health, was destroyed.

Owing to the bad government of Ethered, Sweyn met with little difficulty Ethered. in over running the whole kingdom. The king fled to Normandy for safety, and Sweyn, the first of the Danish monarchs, was proclaimed king; he enjoyed. however, the sovereignty of England but a short time, for dying the same year, Ethered was recalled; who, after holding the reins of government a short time, was succeeded by his son Edmund Ironside. This prince, by a treaty with Canute, king of Denmark, divided his kingdom into two parts, reserving the southern division, including Reading, to himself, but being murdered the following year at Oxford by Leolf, a notorious robber, whom he seized by the hair for insolently coming into the hall, where he kept a festival, and seating himself at table with his attendants, when the ruffian drew a dagger, and stabbing Edmund to the heart, he instantly expired.2

Canute, succeeded to the sovereignty of England, and was followed by his sons Harold and Hardicanute, but the Danish line of princes became Edward so odious to the people, that in less than forty years they restored the Saxon the Conrace in the person of Edward, surnamed the Confessor; in which family fessor. the crown remained till the conquest by William, duke of Normandy, to whom it became an easy prey,\* after the death of Harold, in the battle William I of Hastings.

Nothing particular relating to this town is recorded in history, during the reigns of the two Williams; but in that of Henry I. it began to make Henry I. a somewhat more distinguished figure. From this monarch's partiality, or as others say, from remorse of conscience for having imprisoned his brother Robert, and deprived him of his eye sight, he began the erection here, in the twentieth year of his reign, of a splendid abbey for benedictine monks, the whole of which, except the church, was finished in the space of five years. Besides liberally endowing it with large possessions, he also added a donation

1016 Edward.

1014

Canute. 1016

1066

<sup>\*</sup> Traces of Danish ancestry are still observable in the names of some of the most ancient families here, as the Deanes and Adeanes, formerly a Dane, Selwyn or Swaine has also been a common name here.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>5</sup> Turner's Anglo-Saxon History.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup> Hume

<sup>3</sup> Matthew Paris.

CHAP. I. of several precious relics, and among them the hand of St. James the Apostle, which was given to him by his daughter the empress Matilda.

Henry spent much of his time at this place, but, dying\* at Rouen, in 1135 Normandy, the 1st Dec. 1135, from eating too heartily of stewed lampreys, his body was embalmed, and transported, agreeably to his own request, to this abbey for interment. The monks, in gratitude, erected a magnificent monument to his memory, which was destroyed at the reformation, in the reign of Edward the Sixth.\*

His nephew, Stephen, having seized the throne, in violation of a solemn Stephen. 1136 oath he had taken to Henry, to support the right of his daughter after the king's decease, found it necessary, in order to support his usurpation, to build castles in various parts of his dominions; among these was one at Reading, which was surrendered to Henry II. duke of Normandy, and grandson to Henry I. in 1153, by the treaty of Wallingford. And Henry, as soon as he came to the throne, caused it, with many others, to be destroyed.

During the contest between Stephen and Henry for the throne, Henry's 1141 mother, the empress Matilda, came to Reading, and was favorably received by the inhabitants, but whether they otherwise espoused her cause, or that of Stephen, is uncertain.

Henry II. ascended the throne, on the death of Stephen, in 1154; and HenruII. 1154 soon after the commencement of his reign his eldest son, Prince William, dying in the fourth year of his age, was interred near his great grandfather, Henry I. in the abbey at Reading.

> About this period chivalry was carried to its utmost extravagance. Tilts and tournaments were practised in every court in Europe, and it was by no means uncommon to see charges for high treason, and other crimes, determined by single combat in the field. A remarkable instance of this was decided here in this reign, which we present to our readers, nearly as we find recorded in "Norroy Segur's Honours Military and Civil."

> "The king having marched an army into Wales, Robert of Mountford accused Henry of Essex of treason, in having, near to a place called Colshill, thrown away the royal standard, saying the king was dead; by which all those who were marching to his assistance turned back. Essex denied the charge, and challenged Mountford to prove it by single combat, which was accepted, and a pleasant island, + near Reading, was fixed on for the decision

> \* The death of Henry, says Matthew Paris, was foreshewn by a tremendous hurricane, on the eve of St. Simon and St. Jude, which threw down church steeples, houses, &c. and tore up trees by the roots, so that many thought the end of the world was coming on.

> \* This combat was probably decided on the island in the Thames to the eastward of Caversham bridge. Rog. Hoveden. \* Dodd's Church History. 3 Matth. Paris.

1164

1171

1185

of the contest, when the success of either of the combatants was supposed to CHAP. I. determine the truth or falshood of the accusation. On the appointed day, the knights met on horseback, clad in armour, and the charge being sounded, Mountford attacked his adversary\* with so much violence, as, almost at the first onset, to throw him from his saddle, when, being stunned by the fall, and fainting with the loss of blood, he was taken up, apparently dead, and conveyed to the abbey, where, by the care and assiduity of the monks, he was recovered; but, whether from shame for having been overcome, or from a conviction of his guilt, which was confirmed in the minds of the people by his defeat, he renounced the world, and having, with the king's permission, and to avoid the mark of infamy, and the loss of his estates, received the tonsure, he became a monk, and bestowed all his property to encrease the revenues of the abbey."

Under this reign also the abbey church was completed and consecrated by archbishop Becket, in the presence of the king and ten bishops; and the parliament, for the first time, met here in 1171,2 when several statutes were enacted:

Henry II. passed much of his time at this place, either allured by the pleasantness of the situation, or from respect to the memory of the royal founder, from whom he inherited the throne. He kept his whitsuntide here in 1165, and his easter in 1177; and in 1184 he was present at a convocation held here, in which Baldwin was elected archbishop of Canterbury;3 in 1185 he received here Heraclius, patriarch of the holy resurrection, and Roger, master of the hospital of Jerusalem, who were sent on a solemn embassy by pope Lucius, to inform him of the successes of Saladine against the crusaders in the holy war, and to solicit his assistance. At the same time Heraclius presented him the keys of the holy sepulchre, and the royal banners of Jerusalem; these the monarch returned, and, as the question so deeply involved in it the interest of his kingdom, he declined giving a direct answer, till he had an opportunity of consulting the prelates and barons of his realm.4

Henry, dying in 1189, was succeeded by his son Richard, who soon Richard I after his accession to the throne was prevailed on by the pope to join with 1188

<sup>\*</sup> In Leland's Collectanea, vol. 3, p. 410, he says "Anno D. 1163. Duellum factum inter R. de Munford et Henricum de Essex, vi Id. Apr. apud Radinge, quem Robertum Henricus in campo semivivum reliquit."-Ex. Chron. Vestust:

But according to Matthew Paris, " Anno 1163, Robertus de Montforde, cum Henrico de Essexia; de proditione regis, singulari certamine congrediens: victoriam reportavit. Qua de causa, Henricus notam infamiæ simul, et exhæreditationis jacturam incurrens; indulgentia pii Regis, apud Radingum, habitum monachalem susceptit."

So uncertain are historical records, that these early writers assign the victory differently to each of the combatants.

<sup>1</sup> Mat. Paris. 2 Brompton.

<sup>3</sup> Lyson's Berkshire.

<sup>. 4</sup> Roger Hoveden.

CHAP. I. Philip, king of France, in an expedition to the holy land, leaving his own dominions a prey to civil dissensions, brought on by the oppressive government 1191

of Longchamp, chancellor and bishop of Ely, whom the king, during his absence, had appointed to the regency of the country. The mal-administration of Longchamp being represented to the king on his voyage, he sent a commission to William the earl mareschal, and three others, impowering them to bring the chancellor to trial, and inflict on him such punishment as the nature of his offences might require. But John, the king's brother, impatient of the delays attending a regular trial, summoned a meeting of the great men of the nation to take place at Lodden (Leodone) bridge, between Reading and Windsor, on the first Sunday after michaelmas, to take into consideration the arduous affairs of the kingdom.\* The convention seems to have no sooner met, than it adjourned to Reading, where several charges were made against the chancellor; particularly one for having caused the archbishop of York to be violently taken out of a church, and sent to prison; for which offence, he, and all those who had been concerned in the transaction, were, by the bishops then at Reading, excommunicated with lighted candles, in the most solemn manner. This is the only occurrence of a public nature which is recorded to have taken place at Reading, during Richard's reign, most of which he spent in the wars abroad, or in captivity; and dying soon after his return home, he left his kingdom to his brother John.

1199

John. 1206

While John was engaged in a war with France, the pope sent Terentinus, legate of the apostolic sec, to visit the principal towns in England, in order to levy a considerable sum of money. At Reading he held a council, on the eve of St. Luke, but we are not informed of any particular business which was transacted at it. Probably it was called only for the purpose of levying money from the clergy; for the historian adds, that " after seeing his packages secured and disposed of with the utmost care, the hasty traveller took his leave of England."1.

This year, Joceline, bishop of Wells, was consecrated bishop of Bath, at Reading, by William, bishop of London.

1209

In the year 1209, a priest of the university of Oxford having, as it is said, by accident, killed a woman, the mayor of the city sent immediately to arrest him at his lodgings, but, the offender having fled, three other priests who were found there were seized, and committed to prison, though they were wholly innocent of the crime. These, the king ordered to be hanged, in

<sup>\*</sup> Mr. Coates, p. 8, says, Richard held a parliament here this year, but this must be a mistake he being then in Palestine, warring against Saladine.

A parliament was held here, but Richard was not present at it. - Brompton.

<sup>1</sup> Matthew Paris.

direct opposition to the privileges of their order, which so exasperated the CHAP. I. clergy, that both masters and students, to the number of about three thousand, quitted the university in 1213, most of whom settled at Reading, where they pursued their studies, to the great emolument, and advantage of the town.

1213

The oppressive government of John having created a civil war between him and his barons, the pope seized this opportunity of converting it to his own advantage, for the purpose of levying an extraordinary Romescot, or Peter's pence, in England. He therefore sided with the barons, who, with the bishops and clergy, were prevailed upon to hold a council, to consider of his demands. This council, however, broke up by the king's order, without coming to any determination; on which the legate immediately convoked a synod to be held at Reading, where he extorted from the members a considerable aid in lieu of Peter's pence, for having, as he pretended, been the occasion of the king's opposition to the pope's measures.

John, finding himself unable to contend with such powerful opponents. supported by the menaces of the pope, resolved upon surrendering his crown into the hands of the legate; and, in order to make it appear, that the interest of the barons was not neglected on this occasion, he agreed to hold a convention at Reading, for the restoration of those possessions which he had so unjustly seized. This meeting, however, the king did not think proper to attend; and it was adjourned to Wallingford, where he promised to restore their property in the most ample manner. This engagement also he found means to evade; and, at another meeting held at Reading, the legate favoring his Majesty's cause, the business was again deferred, notwithstanding each of the sufferers produced a schedule of the losses he had sustained from the king's arbitrary proceedings.\*

1213

1214

The barons, finding no reliance could be placed on the royal word, again had recourse to arms, and convoked another council to be held here, at which the king was present, when the appeal, brought by them against the conduct of the legate, who was then at Boulogne, and who had supported the monarch in the oppression of his subjects, was confirmed. This so exasperated the pope, that he sent over a commission empowering the bishop of Winchester, the abbot of Reading, and Pandulph, sub-deacon of the Roman church, to excommunicate the barons, with all those who favored their cause; and to place their estates under an ecclesiastical interdict. But, the excommuni-

<sup>\*</sup> The author of Historia Aurea says, 'Stephan Langton, archbishop of Canterbiry, kept a counsail at Reding, for goodes to be restored to the clergy, taken away by King John. Stephan had adjudgid to hym 3 M. Markes. The residew of the clergy, 15 M. Markes.' 3

Wood's Annals of the University of Oxford, vol. I. fol, 182. 2 Mat. Paris. 3 Leland's Coll.

CHAP. I. cation being general, it in some measure lost its effect; and the barons continued their opposition in defiance of the threats of the church, or the authority of the king. His holiness then sent another bull to the same commissioners, authorizing them to excommunicate each of the refractory barons by name; but this had no more effect than the former; and the wounds which this afflicted kingdom had sustained during the civil war, were only closed by the death of the monarch, which happened in 1216.

His son and successor, Henry III, seems occasionally to have made Reading the place of his residence; and, as it was the custom of those days, for our kings to pass the festival of christmas at one of the principal towns of their dominions, so Henry chose this place for that purpose in 1227. Here also he appointed his army to rendez-vous, preparatory to its embarkation at Portsmouth for France, in the beginning of April, 1230.

As this prince pursued the same impolitic line of conduct as his father had done, in the latter part of his reign, in assisting the pope to plunder his subjects, it is not surprising that he met with the same opposition .-Although much may be said for the dark superstition which unfortunately prevailed in those days, vet almost the whole of his reign exhibited a series of rapacity by the monarch, and of resistance by his people. In 1240, an assembly of the elergy, and principal men of the realm, was convened at Reading, by Otto, the pope's legate, to take into consideration the distresses of his holiness, arising from the ill success of the war which he had for a long time carried on against the emperor Frederic; in defence, as he stated. of the rights of the church. The legate concluded a long speech, by earnestly requesting a grant of one fifth part of all their property, for the further prosecution of this disasterous war. After the many impositions the people had submitted to, from the same quarter, this request appeared particularly unseasonable; and the legate was informed, that they could not take upon themselves so insupportable a burthen, without more mature deliberation. Otto, finding them inflexible in their resolution, and proof against all his artifices,

While this assembly was sitting, Richard earl of Cornwall, the king's brother, with other noblemen and gentlemen who had espoused the cause of the cross, came here to take leave of their friends previous to their departure for the Holy Land. Although their presence must have added much to the splendor of the company already assembled, yet a general gloom pervaded the minds of all the people from the distressed state the country was reduced to, and made

Matthew Paris.

was obliged to adjourn the meeting to a future day.2

\* Matthew Paris.

1240

Henry

III.

1216

1227

1205

1938

1363

the departure of those who had taken the cross peculiarly to be regretted. CHAP. I. The bishops earnestly entreated the prince, not to desert his country in such a situation, and leave it a prev to rapacious foreigners, who, no longer awed by his presence, would place no limits to their extortion, and overwhelm it with beggary, oppression, and ruin. These remonstrances were not sufficient to prevail upon the earl to delay his departure; he assured them he had done every thing in his power to alleviate their miseries, and finding all his efforts fruitless, he could no longer witness the desolation to which his country was reduced, but felt himself under a necessity of leaving it, even if his oath had not bound him to the defence of the Holv Land.

1244 Soon after the prince's departure, the legate convened a meeting of all the clergy of the county of Berks, in hopes of finding them more tractable than a general synod; but in this he was disappointed, for the same spirit of opposition to his measures manifested itself here, till the king, by the advice of Edmund, archbishop of Canterbury, interposed his authority, by which they were at length obliged to comply with the legate's request.'

In 1246, we find the king held a court here, and probably spent his 1245 christmas at the abbev; as the deed whereby he granted to his uncle Peter of Savoy all the houses in the Strand, in London, for which he was to pay annually into the exchequer three barbed arrows in lieu of service was dated at this town.

The first charter ever granted by any of our kings to the guild merchants of Reading, was by Henry, on the 5th of July 1254, at Portsmouth, 1234 while on his way to the Continent: by which he laid the foundation of those privileges the corporation now possess, although the liberalities of succeeding monarchs have considerably enlarged them.

The severities practised towards the Jews in this reign, compelled many of those unfortunate people to leave the country, while others to preserve their lives, embraced christianity, and were quartered on different monasteries: two of these converts were sent to the abbot of Reading, to be supported out of his revenues, and instructed in the doctrines of the church. This mode of taxing religious establishments, was probably not very acceptable to the incumbents: for on the king's attempting to borrow large sums of the great abbies, such as St. Albans, Westminster, Reading. &c. most of them refused, and particularly the abbot of Reading, who successfully supported his determination to the last, alledging the hardships they had sustained by maintaining the Jews. Notwithstanding this denial of the abbot and manks to the king's

CHAP. I. request, it appears the king resided here, and most probably in the abbey, in the following year, where michaelmas term was held. '

The arbitrary conduct of the sovereign towards his inferior subjects, and 1263 his perfidy towards the barons, alienated the affections of both from his government, and obliged them to unite in defence of their violated liberties. On this occasion Henry called a parliament to be held here, instead of London, fearing it might be overawed by the trained bands of that city, and consequently not so much at his devotion, as it would be in a provincial town; but the earl of Essex who was at the head of the rebellious barons, refusing to attend, it was dissolved, without entering on the business for which it had been assembled.

Hitherto parliaments, or rather conventions of the barons and clergy, 1273 (for the commons had hitherto no share in the government,) had met without any regular writs being issued; but when king Henry and prince Edward were made prisoners by the barons, Henry, for the first time, issued writs for convoking a parliament, to concert measures for obtaining his liberty, in which every shire was ordered to return two knights, and every city and borough two burgesses. Soon after which, at a council held here, it was decreed that the clergy of each diocess should elect two proctors, to appear for them at the next convocation: 'qui auctoritatem habeant una nobiscum, tractare de his, quæ 'ecclesiæ communi utilitati expediant Anglicanæ in proxima congregatione 'nostra tempore parliamenti proximi.'\* From which time the clergy have always met in convocation at the beginning of a new parliament; but since the reign of queen Anne, they have not been permitted to act.3

Henry dying soon after, left his crown to his son, Edward I. whose reign was so much occupied with his wars in France and Scotland, that it is doubtful if he ever visited this place; however, a synod was held here, in the seventh year of his reign, which was convoked by John de Peckham, archbishop of Canterbury, under pretence of obtaining the ratification of the canons of the general council, held at Lyons, in France, concerning pluralities; but the real design was to procure the passing of some canons, in opposition to the royal prerogative,3

The first, decreed excommunication against those who sued for the king's letters, to prohibit certain causes being tried in the ecclesiastical courts.

The second, subjected those magistrates to the same penalty, who refused to imprison excommunicated persons.

Edward I 1279

<sup>\* &</sup>quot;Who, together with us, shall have authority to treat of those things, which are expedient for the common good of the church of England, at our next meeting in the time of parliament."

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>4</sup> Coates's History of Reading, p. 10. <sup>2</sup> Hutchinson's History of Dorset,

The third, subjected to the same punishment, all those who invaded the CHAP I. church lands.

The fourth, prohibited, under the same penalty, the selling of provisions to the archbishop of York, whenever he came within the jurisdiction of the see of Canterbury. 4

These canons were considered by Edward, so great an encroachment on his prerogative, that he soon after compelled the archbishop to rescind them. He afterwards, according to Prynne, ordered all monasteries to be searched. and the money found in them to be sent to his exchequer, but as this circumstance is not mentioned by our best historians, it is probably not correct, and the more so, as a convocation of the clergy was held this year when they granted him a tenth. 2

During the reign of the unfortunate Edward II. we find nothing re- Edward markable concerning the subject of this history, except that in 1314, Edward being this year at Reading, his officers seized twenty-three quarters of oats. belonging to Nicholas At-Oke of Stratfield Mortimer, for the king's chickens, and as much litter as was valued at thirteen shillings, which he had provided for the reception of his landlord, the bishop of St. Davids. On a petition to parliament, satisfaction was ordered to be made to the owner, the officers having refused to pay either for the litter or corn. The latter was valued at £3.13s.4d. 3

The attachment which Edward shewed to his favorites, was the principal occasion of these illegal seizures, which, with other acts of tyranny, was the cause of the civil war which soon after followed, and the deposition of the unfortunate monarch; and to add to the misery of the people, so great a famine raged in every part of the kingdom, that 'the wealthiest noblemen were obliged to dismiss the greater part of their domestics. The highways were ' infested with robbery and murder: the streets and public places exhibited the ' most dismal scenes of misery and distress. Numbers of wretched creatures were seen fainting and dying for want of subsistence; and helpless parents ' lying in their last agonies, surrounded by their tender offspring, clamorous for The prisons were burst open, and the malefactors devoured by the ' desperate populace; the dead became a prey to the living; the graves were ' robbed of their tenants, to allay the rage of hunger; and to such a degree of horror did this calamity increase, that even the mother was known to destroy ' and feed upon the fruit of her own womb.' -- Such is one of those pictures which historians have drawn of former times; which, although too frequent in the chequered page of history, we are too apt to admire, and even to prefer

II.

1307

1295

CHAP. I. to the present auspicious period, when plenty presides at our boards, the laws are distributed with impartial justice, religion is cultivated by reason, and kings are taught to consider the rights, the liberties, and the happiness of the people, as the surest foundation of their own glory. By this happy change in the administration of our government, famine, and its attendant miseries, have been banished the land; arts and sciences cultivated; industry rewarded; and a degree of public happiness has been experienced, unknown to our forefathers, from the invasion of the Romans, when we became civilized, 'till the expulsion of the Stewarts, when we became free.

Edward In the year 1346, Edward III passed his christmas here; at which time a III. great tournament was held, and at his departure, being in want of money to 1346 carry on the war against France, he borrowed a large sum of the monks, for which he pledged his jewels as a security for the repayment, but how or when they were redeemed, history remains silent.

The marriage of John of Gaunt, earl of Richmond, Edward's third son, with Blanche daughter of Henry duke of Lancaster, was solemnized in the abbey church here, on the 19th of May, 1359; on which occasion great rejoicings were made, and which Chaucer has celebrated in a poem called, 'his dream,' wherein are the following lines descriptive of the spot, and the at
dending circumstances:

- " And the feste holden was in tentes,
- " In a rome, in a large plaine,
- " Under a wode, in a champaine,
- " Betwixte a river, and a well,
- "Where never had abbey ne sell
- "Yben, ne kirke, house, ne village;
- '" In time of any mane's age,
- " And dured three monthes the fest." \*

Though this description of the spot where the feast was held is written in the form of a dream, yet, from its being 'in a champaine, betwixt a river and a well;' it is probable the poet had his eye upon the King's-mead, than which, in the month of May, no place could be better adapted for such an occasion. Its being 'under a wode,' is another characteristic of this place, which is overhung by the Oxfordshire hills, at that time, no doubt, clothed with wood. There is, however, some difficulty in assigning a place for the well he mentions, from the insignificancy of the object, and their frequency in every part of the town, but this might not have been the case when Chaucer wrote; or, if it were, it is probable this term was not merely confined to its present acceptation, but was used as a general term for all springs; and this idea seems corrobated by the following passage in the same poem:

" in his thoughtes as he lay

"Within a lodge, out of the way,

"Beside a well in a forest.

This definition is also confirmed in Jamieson's Scotish Dictionary, article WALL.

### HISTORY OF READING.

17

CHAP. I.

1359

Again,

"Unto a tente prince and princes

" Methought brought me, and my maistres,

"Which tente as church parochiall,

" Ordaint was in especiall

" Both for the fest, and for the sacre,

Where archbishop, and archdiacre

" Ysongen full out the service."

If we consider the splendor of Edward's court, who was at this time in the meridian of his glory, attended by his five sons in the flower of youth, the king of France his prisoner, and all the principal nobles of the land, together with the tilts and tournaments that were every day exhibited, as well as the number of the tents, and variety of banners displayed on this occasion, we may conclude this to have been the most pictures que and pleasing sight ever beheld in this town.

Edward III. dying in 1377, was succeeded on the throne by Richard II, son of Edward the black prince, at that time little more than ten years of age. The king's uncle, John of Gaunt duke of Lancaster, owing to some insinuations which had been thrown out against him, as wishing to place the crown on his own head, refused to take upon himself the office of regent during the king's minority, to which he was certainly entitled by his birth, being the eldest surviving son of the late king; whereupon a council was appointed in his stead; who, almost as the first act of their new government, took into consideration the debts of the crown, which had increased to an alarming degree, in consequence of the late wars in France. In order therefore to reduce these debts, they obtained the sanction of parliament, to levy a poll-tax of one shilling per year on every inhabitant above the age of puberty; and, as taxes were at this time but little known, and less understood, this was considered as a very grievous oppression, by a people already laboring under the bondage of their

1377

1381

In this expression, the well is generally understood to be a spring in Woodstock-park, called Rosamond's-well; and therefore this under consideration, might also be intended to denote a spring; and the only one connected with the abbey, being the conduit, whereby it was supplied with water, I think it not improbable that this was the well intended by Chaucer; between which and the river Thames the feast was kept; though perhaps after all, this expression was only introduced for the sake of the rhyme, as our poet might have entertained the same opinion as one of his successors, who thought, that

"Those who write in rhyme, still make

"The one verse for the other's sake,

" For one for sense, and one for rhyme,

66 I think's sufficient at one time." --- Samuel Butler.

1382

1384

CHAP. I. lords\*, and gave rise to serious insurrections in different parts of the kingdom. The rebels from Kent and Essex, (who were afterwards joined by those of other counties, and particularly by the inhabitants of Reading, 1) headed by Wat Tyler and Jack Straw, marched into London, where they committed the most dreadful outrages, murdering every person whom they deemed obnoxious to their cause, and destroyed all the public records which fell in their way. To put an end to this scene of confusion and dread, the young king appointed a meeting with the rebels in West Smithfield; where their leader, Wat Tvler, behaving in an indecent and insolent manner to his sovereign, was stabbed by Sir William of Walworth, lord mayor of London; and, his followers were so confounded at the death of their leader, and the magnanimity of their voung prince, that they were prevailed upon to return to their homes, with such concessions as it was thought expedient to grant them, but which were never afterwards fulfilled; for, his majesty, having raised a large army, set out for the purpose of making a tour through his dominions, and of taking a severe revenge on all who had been concerned in the rebellion; among other places, he came the following year to Reading. What the effects of this visit were, history has not informed us; but there can be no doubt, that the same severities were exercised on the inhabitants here, as at other places.

Soon after the rebellion was quelled in every part of the kingdom, the king thought it necessary to effect a reconciliation between himself and his uncle, the duke of Lancaster, for an affront which had been offered to him in Scotland; for which purpose, he, by letter, invited his injured kinsman to return to England, and sent orders to the different sheriffs of the counties through which he was to pass, to escort him, with a thousand men at arms, besides archers, on his way to Reading, where Richard waited his arrival. From hence they proceeded together to London, where the parliament was summoned to meet in the November following.2

From the earliest period of this king's reign, a difference had subsisted between the court, and the citizens of London, whereby the peace of the city had been often disturbed; but, particularly in 1384, when the re-election of the chief magistrate afforded an opportunity of renewing their former animosities, by open acts of violence. The court party brought forward Sir Nicholas Brembar, in opposition to John of Northampton or Combarton, who

<sup>\*</sup> It is customary in England, as well as in several other countries, for the nobility to have great privileges over the commonalty, whom they keep in bondage; that is to say, they are bound by law and custom, to plough the lands of gentlemen, to harvest the grain, to carry it home to the barn, to thrash and winnow it: they are also bound to harvest the hay, and carry it home. All these service they are obliged to perform for their lords, and many more in England than in other countries.-Froissart's Chronicle. <sup>1</sup> Froissart's Chronicle. 2 Stowe.

was supported by the city; and who had filled the civic chair during the two CHAP. I. preceding years, and was accounted an upright and virtuous magistrate, for the strictness of his government, and the vigilance which he used to suppress the ruling vices of the times. His inflexible honor and integrity, were by no means pleasing to those profligate ministers, who, unfortunately for the nation, surrounded the throne. They therefore resolved, if possible, to procure the election of the former, whom they considered more likely to support their views: For which purpose, every effort was made, within the reach of a corrupt adminisstration to effect their design; and although they succeeded in the attempt. yet, the election was not carried without great opposition and rioting, which was at length suppressed by the summary but arbitrary means used by Sir Robert Knollys,\* who, entering the city with some troops, seized one of the chief members of the opposition, and dragging him from his horse, struck off his head without waiting for the forms of a legal trial. And, though this act was committed by an individual, in defiance of all law and justice, yet, so little were either of them observed in those times, that it does not appear that Sir Robert, was ever called in question for thus violating both, by an arbitrary and wilful murder.

John Northampton himself was taken into custody, and committed to Corffe castle in Dorsetshire, from whence he was afterwards conveyed to Carisbrooke castle in the Isle of Wight; and, as the administration were doubtful of being able to convict him, if tried in the city of London, he was conveyed to Reading, where his majesty then was, and arraigned before judge Tresilian, for conspiring against the king's life; but, refusing to plead in the absence of his superior lord, the duke of Lancaster, he was sentenced to perpetual imprisonment, in the castle of Tintegal in Cornwall, and all his goods to be confiscated to his majesty's use.

In 1389, Richard being at Reading, a peace was concluded between himself and the barons, under the mediation of John of Gaunt the king's uncle, but the arbitrary measures of the government still continuing, the nobles became again discontented, so that when it was found necessary, in 1390, to call the parliament together, the king's ministers, being afraid to summon them to Westminster, the usual place of holding the sessions, they were appointed to meet at Reading. One of the principal objects of their attention was, to effect a reconciliation between the dukes of Lancaster and Gloucester, which they accomplished, and gave great hopes, it is said, of a happy union among

1384

<sup>\*</sup> This gentleman was a soldier of fortune, who had risen by his own merit, and was the founder of the family of that name, which was afterwards so intimately connected with this town, and represented it in many succeeding parliaments.

CHAP. I. all the branches of the royal family. But, these flattering prospects were of short duration; for Richard, suffering himself to be governed by a few favorites, whose mal-administration filled the nation with murmurs and discontents, at length produced a conspiracy for overturning the government; 1398 at the head of which were Thomas of Woodstock, the king's uncle, the archbishop of Canterbury, the earls of Arundel, and Warwick, and many other noblemen; but, the king gaining intelligence of their intentions, they were all seized, and committed to prison, except Thomas of Woodstock, whom Richard, (not daring to bring to trial in London,) sent to Calais, where he was privately murdered by the governor. These tyrannical measures of the crown were succeeded by others equally oppressive, which so effectually alienated the 1399 affections of his subjects, that they soon after broke out into open revolt, under Henry of Bolingbroke, duke of Lancaster, who, being joined by a numerous army, compelled the misguided monarch to resign his crown to him, and laid the foundation of that destructive civil war between the houses of York and Lancaster, which, for so many years afterwards, desolated this unhappy country.

Henry IV During the reign of Henry IV. the succeeding prince, this town seems to have been unnoticed by history, nor is it certain whether that monarch was Henry V. ever here; but his son Henry V. visited it in 1415, from whence he issued a proclamation, stating, that the money granted by parliament was insufficient to make a second payment to his troops engaged in the war against France, and inviting his loving subjects to lend him a sum of money, upon such securities as he should propose.

Henry VI Henry dying, at Vincennes in France, in 1422, was succeeded by his son 1422 Henry VI. This prince summoned a parliament to meet at Reading, the 12th of February 1440, at which time a new order of nobles was instituted, stiled viscounts, and placed between earls and barons, below the former and above the latter; John lord Beaumont being created viscount Beaumont, in full parliament.<sup>2</sup> Another parliament was summoned to meet here, on the 6th of March 1452, which, after sitting a short time, was prorogued to Westminster, to meet

on the 20th of April, where it sat till the 2d of July, when it was again prorogued to Reading, to meet on the 7th of November, where it sat till the 11th of February following.<sup>3</sup>

In the succeeding reign of Edward IV. the plague breaking out in LonIV. don, in 1461, the parliament was again adjourned to Reading, to meet on the
6th of November, where it sat till the early part of the following year. This
was the last parliament held here, and the reformation coming on soon after,
put an end also to synods, councils, and ecclesiastical assemblies, which had
occasionally met here since the foundation of the abbey by Henry II.

<sup>1</sup> Rymer's Fædera.

<sup>2</sup> Selden's Titles of Honor, p. 680.

<sup>3</sup> Cotton's Abridgment,

In 1464, Edward held his court at Reading, from whence he issued a CHAP. I. proclamation, dated the 29th of September, for raising the price of bullion from 29 sterlingez the pound of silver at the mint, to 33 sterlingez; after which the noble of gold, which then passed for 6s. 8d. was to be raised to 8s. 4d. sterlings; the half noble at 4s. 2d. and the ferling of gold at 2s. 1d. " and to the intent to eschewe all man' difficultez doubtez and ambiguitez that peradventure might falle in mennes myndez in this partie our seide sovign lord the kynge willeth and ordaineth that three grotes shall make a shillynge. six half grotez a shylvinge, twelve pence which shall be called sterlinges a shylvinge, twenty four half pennys a shillying. forty eight ferthings a shillyinge. and twenty shyllinge shall make a pound, and thirteen shillynges and four pence shall make a mark."1

1464

In the same year, Edward's marriage with Elizabeth, lady Grey, after having been kept secret many months, was first openly acknowledged at Reading, on which occasion she made her public appearance at the abbey, being conducted thither by the duke of Gloucester, and the earl of Warwick.2

In 1475, this borough was assessed by parliament to raise thirty shillings and ten pence, as their proportion of the subsidy granted; and, for the collection of which, four persons were appointed by the corporation.2 This is the first instance we find here of any taxes having been levied upon the inhabitants in this way.

1475

Richard III. does not appear to have visited this place during the short Richard period of his reign; but Henry VII. was here in 1487, when he ordered the abbot to convert an almshouse, which had been recently suppressed, to some religious purpose; who thereupon founded the present free grammar school, which has continued to increase in reputation, to the present time, and wherein many learned men have received their education.

III.

1487

1509

1524

Henry VIII. frequently resided here, and particularly in 1524, when the churchwardens of St. Lawrence's parish received two shillings " for the house in the Market-place wherein the fletcher lived, for the time of the king's being here;" but this was probably for the accommodation of some of his attendants, and not for the king himself, whose residence was always at the abbev. His queen, Catharine of Arragon, was here in 1529, as was his majesty, a second time, in 1541.

In 1543, a subsidy being granted the king, by parliament, to be paid in three years, the proportion assessed on this borough was nine shillings and four pence each year, and was paid in equal proportions, by each of the three parishes.4

Edward VI in his progress through the kingdom, arrived here the 13th of September 1552, and was received in the following manner:

<sup>4</sup> Ibid. 3 Corporation Diary. <sup>2</sup> W. Wyrcester, p. 500. <sup>4</sup> Archaiologia, vol. 12,

CHAP. 1. "Mr. Thomas Aldworth, the mayor, accompanied by the substance of the " gentlemen of the town, as well burgesses as others, in their best apparel, re-" ceived his majesty at Coley Cross,\* all being on foot, where the mayor, on his " knee, humbly welcomed his majesty, and kissed the mace, and delivered it to " his majesty, who most gently staved his horse, and received it, and immediate-" ly delivered the same mace unto the mayor. And also his majesty, further " stayed his horse, until the mayor had taken his horse, and then the mayor, " appointed by a gentleman usher, rode before the king's majesty through the " town, unto the king's place, at the which time, forasmuch as it was the " first time of his majesty's coming, the said mayor presented, and gave unto " his majesty two yoke of oxen, which cost fifteen pounds; the charge " whereof was born by the inhabitants of the said town, as well by the " burgesses as others. And, at the same time, being his majesty's first " coming, certain officers demanded certain duties, as they call it, which were " paid unto them, at the cost and charges of the said mayor and burgesses, " as follows :-- 1

|    | Imprimis,              |    |   | To the footmen             | X   | 0    |
|----|------------------------|----|---|----------------------------|-----|------|
| To | the herald             | XX | 0 | To the king's cup-bearer   | vi  | viii |
| To | the serjeant at arms   |    |   | To the clerk of the market |     |      |
| To | the trumpeters at arms | XX | 0 | To the marshall            | iii | iv   |

Mary

1553

The same ceremony was observed when queen Mary came here in the beginning of her reign, accompanied by her husband, Philip king of Spain, at which time the presents made to their majesties, as well as the fees paid to their attendants, were nearly the same: but this custom seems to have been dropped in the succeeding reign, for though queen Elizabeth frequently honored this place, by making a temporary residence at the abbey, which had been converted into a royal palace, there is no record, I believe, in the corporation

1558

Elizabeth books, of any particular form being observed on her arrival. She resided here in 1601, at which time she conferred the honor of knighthood on John Norris, of Fyfield.

This town was greatly indebted to Elizabeth for many donations, which will be spoken of in their proper places. She also confirmed and enlarged the charter, granted by former monarchs to the corporation, and was a great encourager of the woollen manufactory here, which during her reign was carried to a greater extent than at any other period, and was the means of raising to affluence many of the inhabitants, from whose bounty even the poor of the present times are considerably benefitted. From one of these indus-

<sup>\*</sup> Probably where the turnpike now is.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> Corporation Diary.

trious inhabitants, sprung archbishop Laud, who was born October 7, 1573 CHAP. I. in a house (as it is said,) lately standing on the north side of Broad street.\*

Prynne, in his Life of Archbishop Laud, says, "he was born at Redding, in Barkshire, of poore and obscure parents, in a cottage over against the cage: which cage, since his coming to the archbishoprick of Canterbury, upon complaint of master Elveston, was removed to some other place; and the cottage pulled down, and new built by the bishop;" but this seems a mere calumny of the author's, to degrade the archbishop, whose parents were not so obscure as he pretends, neither was there ever, as far as we have been able to learn, a cage in the situation here stated; and, it is more than probable, that the cottage, as it is here called, was not rebuilt by the archbishop, who paid occasional visits to this his native town, but never made it his residence after leaving college.

Nothing particular occurred here during the reign of James I. respecting this place, except that he was once here, on his way to Bath, in 1612; and the following year, his queen, Ann of Denmark, also visited the town, but made no long stay here.

\* This house has lately been taken down; but a view of the building, as it appeared in 1811, is annexed to the portrait of this generous benefactor to his native town. One of the chambers retained the name of 'Laud's study.'



# History of Reading.

#### CHAPTER II.

CHAP. II. WE now come to the eventful reign of Charles I. a period replete with misfortunes both to the monarch and his people, from its commencement to the Charles I. melancholy catastrophe which put an end to the life of the one, and the liberties of the other; during which period this town experienced more distress than it had suffered in any former times since the invasion of the Danes, in the tenth century.

In the first year of his reign, the plague having broke out in the cities of London and Westminster, Charles, to prevent the spreading of the infection, adjourned a part of michaelmas term, as also the receipt of the revenue, to this town, where a commission passed the great seal, for executing the laws against recusants, which were read in all the courts of judicature here, some of which were held in the town-hall and the abbey, as the high court of chancery, the court of exchequer, the courts of king's bench, common pleas, wards and liveries, and the court of requests, but these not being sufficient to contain them all, the augmentation court was held in the school-room, the lord-keeper lodged with Sir E. Clarke, the recorder: the attorney-general lodged at the Fryers in Mr. John Saunders'\* house, who was also recorder, and appears to have held the office conjointly with Sir E. Clarke. Some of the judges lodged at the Golden-bear, at the south-east corner of Castle-street, which was then called Serjeant's-inn in Fleet-street, and others at Mr. Thomas Turner's, the mayor's, near the High-bridge, which was then denominated Sarjeant's-inn in Chancery-lane. But this precaution, instead of preventing the plague from spreading, was, in all probability, the occasion of bringing it to Reading, 1

<sup>\*</sup> This gentlemen was member for the borough in five successive parliaments.

+ He served the office of mayor three times.

<sup>†</sup> The dread occasioned by this visitation, as it is called, among the people, cannot be better exemplified, than by the following passage in Whitlock's Memorials; when the plague was somewhat as
Rushworth's Collections.

where it soon after made its appearance. At first, only two persons were Chap. II. affected with it, and it was hoped the contagion would stop here; but, unfortunately it soon began to break out in various parts of the town, and at length became so alarming, that all communication among the inhabitants was mutually avoided, all the houses, where the infection was known to exist, were shut up,\* and the following regulation published by order of the magistrates:

"This day it was ordered, for the better preventing of the visitation of the plague in this corporation, that if any inhabitant shall, at any time hereafter, during the infection of the plague, receive, or take into his house, any person or persons, goods or merchandize, brought from London, every such offender shall be shut up in his own house, by the space of one month, and to be kept at his own charge."

And, for the better enforcing a compliance with this order, watchmen were stationed in each parish, to prevent any communication with the visited houses, and to take care that no goods brought from London should be landed at the wharf. Besides these precautions, an order was sent from his majesty in council to the mayor to "remove the market and staple of cloth to a more safe place, until Almighty God of his goodness should stop the violence of the contagion," and to send up to the council two well experienced clothiers to give their opinion, what place would be most proper to remove the staple to, and particularly to appoint at his discretion, a sufficient number of watchmen, to watch all houses that were infected or suspected to be so, and also the pesthouse at the Conduit-close, and to keep all suspected persons out of the town. And, for the better performance of these instructions, the mayor was authorised to appoint a sufficient number of the most respectable inhabitants to patrole their several parishes day and night, to see that the watchmen did their duty. From this period, for nearly fifty years, the town does not appear to

suaged, and there died in London but 2500 in a week, it fell to judge Whitlock's turn to go to Westminster-hall, to adjourn michaelmas term, from thence to Reading; and accordingly he went from his house in Buckinghamshire, to Horton near Colnbrook, and the next morning early to Highpark-corner, where he and his retinue dined on the ground, with such meat and drink as they brought in the coach with them, and afterwards he drove fast through the streets, which were empty of people, and overgrown with grass, to Westminster-hall; where the officers were ready, and the judge and his company went straight to the King's-bench, adjourned the court, returned to his coach, and drove away presently out of town.

\* The manner of shutting up infected houses, as we learn from a contemporary writer, was, by fastening the doors on the outside, on each side of which was painted a large red cross, on the arms whereof, extending about two feet on each side, was inscribed, in capital letters, LORD HAVE MERCY UPON US.—Hodge's Loimologia.

d Corporation Diary.

CHAP. II. have been perfectly free from this dreadful visitation, as it was emphatically called, though it was never so fatal as at this time, except in 1638, when great numbers fell victims to its virulence. It first broke out in a house in Minsterstreet, from whence it spread so rapidly into other parts of the town, that it was found necessary to adopt the same methods of precaution as on the former occasion; but, as many of the sufferers were unable to maintain themselves, a tax was levied on the inhabitants for their assistance, out of which those in the pest-house were allowed four-pence a day, the others three-pence.\*

The infection raged principally among the poorer classes, occasioned, no doubt, from their want of cleanliness, and the crowded state of their dwellings, evils which are now happily in a great measure removed, by the improved state in which this deserving class of people now live.

On account of the plague still raging in London, the last term this year was held in Reading, where the commission, under the great seal of England, for the due, and effectual, putting in force the several laws and statutes against popish recusants, was publicly read in all the courts.

During this scene of distress, the king had successively called together several parliaments, which had been dissolved almost as soon as convened. The representatives of the people demanded the redress of grievances, while the monarch and his ministers were calling on them in vain for fresh subsidies. At length Charles determined to govern without the control of parliament, and to raise the necessary supplies by virtue of his prerogative. In the prosecution of this plan, the country was harassed by arbitrary and unconstitutional measures, and his perseverance in levying the unpopular tax for shipmoney, on the inland counties, was one of those numerous acts of oppression, which soon after involved the nation in all the horrors of civil dissention.

Though this town possessed neither materials for building ships, nor sailors to man them, yet, under pretence of guarding the coast, the inhabitants were ordered to provide a ship completely equipped, to be at Portsmouth by the first of March 1636, and the magistrates were authorised to levy the sum of £260, under the pretext of building it, but in reality to be paid into the treasury.‡ Small as this sum may now appear, the difficulty of collecting it

1635

<sup>\*</sup> During the continuance of the infection, the corn-market is said, by tradition, to have been kept on a waste piece of ground in Mapledurham parish, since called New Market-green.

<sup>†</sup> Contagium inter sortis infimæ homines diffusum, repentè admodum luxuriasse; hinc præter propter Lues pauperum vulgo appellitata, equibus holocaustum fere in mensum libitinæ sacratum.— Hodge's Loimologia.

<sup>†</sup> The proportion of ship money levied on each corporation, within this county, was,—for Reading, 260%. Newbury, 120%. Abingdon, 100%. Windsor, 100%. Wokingham, 50%. Wallingford, 20%—Rushworth's Collection.

was so great, that the corporation petitioned the throne, though in vain, "to CHAP. II. have some abatement of some part thereof."

1640

After the decision of the court of exchequer in favor of the crown against Mr. Hampden, who had disputed the legality of the tax, the ministry were encouraged to resort to the same measure, and this town was again assessed in the sum of £220, for the purpose of providing a ship, with men and ammunition.<sup>2</sup> But these sums were so inadequate to the king's necessities, that, after a long struggle, he was at length obliged to resort not only to the ancient mode of calling a parliament, but also to agree that they should not be dissolved without their own consent. Confident of their own strength and popularity, the parliament immediately sat about reforming the government, and retrenching the prerogatives of the crown; but Charles, finding all his efforts for the support of his pretended prerogatives unavailing, appealed to the sword, in defence of what he considered his just rights, and the civil-war ensued.

1642

After the battle of Edge-hill, his majesty fixed his residence at Oxford; and, in order to render his out-posts more secure, he placed garrisons in as many of the neighbouring towns as the number of his forces would admit of, from whence they were ordered to scour the country in flying parties. One of these, which had been stationed at Abıngdon, advancing farther into the country than it had been ordered to do, came within sight of Reading, when Harry Martin, at that time governor of the town for the parliament, taking alarm, fled with all his men towards London, leaving the town open to the king's troops, who accordingly took possession of it without opposition, and Charles appointed sir Arthur Aston to be the governor, with a salary of seven pounds per week, to be paid by the inhabitants.<sup>3</sup>

Aston no sooner took possession of his new government, than he determined to make the town as strong as the nature of the ground would admit; and that the new entrenchments might be completed before the return of the parliament's forces, he issued a proclamation, ordering all the principal inhabitants to "work in raising the bulwarks in the Forbury,\* on pain of forfeiting seven pence a day for every day's non attendance, out of which fines the poorer sort were to be allowed eight pence per day for their labor: Posts and chains were likewise fixed at the end of every street, at the desire of the corporation, who, in a loyal address to the governor, assured him "that they would assist him with their counsel and purses to the utmost of their abi-

<sup>\*</sup> The only remains of these is the Forbury-hill, and part of the fences of the adjoining garden.

2 Ibid.

3 Ibid.

1642

CHAP. II. lities." and that the garrison might not be taken by a surprise, a tax was levied on the inhabitants, "to defrav the expence of providing men and horses to ride out daily as a scout to inform the town of their danger, as they might learn and understand," and, an additional assessment was made "to supply the garrison with cloth, apparel, victuals, and such other things as they stood in need of." A guard was constantly kept in the Oracle, who were provided with wood and coals at the expence of the town. And, to prevent the garrison and inhabitants being distressed for want of provisions, in case of their being besieged, care was taken, not only to have the town supplied with every article of necessity; but on complaint being made, "that one Matthew Pane and others were secretly conveying wheat, and other corn out of the town, the corporation issued an order, forbidding any person to carry away wheat, maslin\*, or rve, and confining the exportation to barley alone, and that the markets might be regularly supplied, "four men were appointed by day, and four by night, to attend the sentinels, for the quict passage of such townsmen and countrymen, as might pass to and from the market." Notwithstanding these burthens, which the loyalty of the corporation induced them to lay on the inhabitants, they were found inadequate to the maintenance of the soldiers, whom the king, from the low estate of his finances, was incapable of paying.

> "The king (says Clarendon) was at this time very much distressed for want of money; for, of all his own revenues, he had not the receiving of one penny within his power; neither did he think fit to compel any one, even such as were known freely to have contributed to the parliament, to supply him; only by letters, and all other gentle ways, he invited those who were able, to consider how much their own interest and prosperity was connected with his." After this favorable display of the king's forbearance, it might be supposed, that he would have been satisfied, with respect to this town, with the great sacrifices the inhabitants had already made in his favor, but this was not the case: Charles had it not in his power, had it been his inclination, to follow the practice ascribed to him by the historian; his necessities compelled him to use harsher modes; and, accordingly we find, that soon after the town had been taken possession of by his troops, he issued an order to the magistrates to make a fresh assessment on the inhabitants, and those who did not make good their payments, within a given time, were, by his express command, to be doubly rated.3

> Every species of oppression was at this period exercised on the unfortunate inhabitants: taxes, assessments, contributions, and forced loans, fol-

<sup>\*</sup> Different sorts of corn mixed together.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup> Corporation Diary.

lowed each other in rapid succession. The former assessment was no sooner Chap. II. paid, than the governor levied a contribution of one hundred and two pounds on the householders, for the pay of the garrison, which was to be paid in within seven days at the farthest; and this was followed by a forced loan of two thousand pounds for his majesty's own use, to be raised by four weekly payments. The demand of so large a sum, after the drains which the town had already experienced, together with the short time allowed for the collecting it, induced the corporation to present the following petition to his majesty:

1643

" To the king's most excellent majesty,

"The humble petition of the mayor, aldermen, and the inhabitants of the town of Reading humbly sheweth,

"That your petitioners, in obedience to your majesty's commands, did attend on sir Arthur Aston, governor of the said town, who, in your majesty's name desired your petitioners, to undertake the further monthly loan of 20001. whereas, your petitioners, since the first advancement of your majesty's army to the said town, have been charged with near 4000l. besides 1000l. contribution for cloth, 4000!. loan, and other losses of the inhabitants of the said town; that your petitioners have been enforced to engage themselves, and the lands and means of the said town, in 10001. for the payment of the said sum, even to the undoing the said town.

"May it please your most excellent majesty, the premises considered, to take into your princely consideration, the miserable estate of your petitioners."

This request not being complied with, they endeavored to raise the loan by an assessment on the principal inhabitants, in the proportion of fifteen shillings per week on every penny laid on each house for the relief of the poor. But this assessment producing no more than five hundred pounds, the corporation borrowed one thousand pounds more on the toll of the market, the rents of Portman's Brook,\* and two tenements in the town, five of their most opulent members being security for the repayment of the money. This sum it was hoped would have satisfied his majesty's immediate wants, and that more time would have been granted them to raise the remaining five hundred; but, being disappointed in this expectation, they were under the necessity of mortgaging their estates, called the Town Orts, Brownshill, and the Wooll Hall. +1

Heavy and oppressive as this loan was, and notwithstanding the great difficulty the corporation found in raising the money, the governor was soon

\* Now the Hog-moors.

<sup>+</sup> Boult's-wharf, top of King street, and the buildings which separate the west end of Fisher 2 Corporation Diary. and Butcher-row.

CHAP. II. after authorised by his majesty, to demand of them a further loan of two thousand pounds. It having been already found impossible to raise so large a sum on the inhabitants, the corporation again had recourse to his majesty, by a petition, soliciting, in the most earnest manner, a mitigation of the sum, 1643 " in consideration of the very heavy burthens they had already borne." This petition having met with no better success than their former one, the corporation, without attempting to harass the people for money they were convinced was out of their power to pay, took the immediate resolution of mortgaging the remainder of their possessions, and thus, by involving their revenues in a state of doubt and uncertainty, led the way, perhaps, to that system of peculation, which, in the minds of the inhabitants, is supposed to have been practised by the members of the corporation up to the commencement of the seventeenth century. It no where appears, I believe, in the corporation books, that either of these mortgages were ever paid by Charles or his successors, and consequently must have been discharged from the surplus produce of their rents, but which not having been regularly accounted for, has given rise to this report, as unjust to the parties concerned, as disgraceful to the town.

The frequent repetitions of these oppressive demands, alienated in a great measure the affections of the inhabitants from the cause they had at first so warmly espoused, and prepared them for the change which was about to take place.

The treaty for peace, which had been for some time negotiating at Oxford, being at length broken off, the parliament determined to pursue the war with the utmost vigour; and accordingly, Essex, who at that time had the command of the forces, was ordered to attempt the recovery of Reading, as well for the future security of London, as for the opening a ready communication with the west of England. Charles had neglected to place a garrison at Henley, which being perceived by Essex, he determined to take possession of it for the parliament, thereby securing to himself a safe retreat, in case of his failing in his attempt on Reading. Accordingly, in the month of February, this year, he detached a large body of horse and foot from Windsor, who, the same evening, entered the town, after being delayed a short time in repairing the bridge, which had been previously broken down. His thus taking possession of Henley, was, probably, a feint to deceive Charles, who expecting, as it had been given out, to be besieged in Oxford, would not venture to diminish his forces, by sending a part of them to strengthen the garrison at Reading. Aston, however, having gained some information of the enemy's route, immediately dispatched a party of horse, in hopes of driving the enemy out of the town, should they not be so fortunate as to pre-occupy it before their arrival. But he was disap-

pointed in this expectation, for the enemy received them with so much spirit, CHAP. II. that they were obliged to retreat, after a short action, with the loss of several of their men.

The following letter, written by an officer in Essex's army, is so descriptive of the place, and the manner of the attack, that the insertion of it in this place may not be altogether uninteresting:

"About nine o'clock at night, we came into Henley, where, before we could get in, by reason that the bridge was not quite laid down, we were enforced to stay an hour and half at the least; so soon as we were come in, and our men but gone to their quarters, some of us, among whom myself was one, rode round to view the town, how it lay; which, when we had done, we appointed four companies to watch all night, one towards Redding, another at the bridge, a third at the upper end of the town, and myself, having the main guard, it being mine for that night, as I was eldest captain of those that watched, I divided my company, and sent my lieutenant, with about forty men, to guard some works which the town had made, on the way to Oxford, I having the rest on the main guard, which was kept in a little round house,\* close by the town hall, where four ways divide themselves.

" Having thus ordered our men, and having planted our ordnance, which were but three in all; one of our biggest pieces towards Redding road, another, which was our best, towards Oxford, and the third, which was but a drake, we planted towards the upper end of the town. And, by the time that this was done, it grew near eleven o'clock. About half an hour after, being in company with captain Betting, it being my place to go the round, he desired to go with me, and so we went with six musqueteers round about the hills which compass the town. About half an hour after twelve, we came in again, and found all quiet and well. About two of the clock in the morning, being in a house with the mayor, and most of our gunners, discoursing together, news was brought, that the enemy was coming upon us, and had fired upon our sentinels, which presently caused an alarm through the town, we all putting on resolution to withstand them to the utmost. The enemy came furiously upon us, with a loud cry "the town is our's," and made no question to have broken through us all, being most of them troopers and dragooners, in number about one thousand, and riding two on a horse. The first sentinel that made discovery of them, having given fire, presently ran away to the court of guard, who also were presently in readiness, and came forth and fired upon them, so as they could not come into the town, so soon as they made account of, but being all, except ten or twelve dragoons, on horse, they

<sup>\*</sup>This house was removed at the time the paving of the town took place.

CHAP. II. broke through our's, and came along the lane towards the town, the way they came being but narrow, and not above a flight shot, or little more in length from their first entrance, we being in readiness to have fired upon them, but durst not, by reason that they drove our men before them all the way along, but our parliament dog lay ready both to bark and to bite, being 1643 laden with one great shot, and two cases, containing one hundred and twenty musket bullets; at length the way being cleared of our men, but full of their's, we let fly; myself being within a yard or two at most when it gave fire, I could easily see the execution it did upon them; vet some of their horse came so desperately on, that they were even ready to enter upon the mouth of the cannon, as presently after the shot was given, appeared by that which follows; but some of our company crying very loud, to let fly and discharge the rest of the ordnance at them, they were put into a terrible fright and flight too, we following the execution. But their desperate onset appeared by this, that we found three men and four horses lying dead within less than a quoit's throw of the mouth of the cannon, and an ensign, which was found half dead, having his leg shot off, and some three shots more in his body, confest the whole affair to us.

"I believe they were so bit, they will scarce brag of their victory, or come again in haste to visit our town. The number of men which we found of their's, were but four that were killed outright, and five horses. One horse also the gunner himself took, and another which fell into a muddy ditch, and there was left till morning, when we took him out. One of these four men, as our soldiers were stripping him, said he was the first captain of the lord Grandison's regiment, and so immediately expired, having received a dozen wounds; six more were found dead in a wood, one of them was a captain; and we were also informed of some who came from Caversham, that divers lay wounded there, so that we may justly conceive, they lost at least thirty of their men. We lost but three in all; one of which was a soldier of mine, Thomas Hyett, a fishmonger's man, who was shot through the body with a pistol shot, as he was coming from his quarters, who was forced to make use of the cavalier's language, and cry out, where are these round headed rogues; but they pursued him, and struck him through the hat with a pole-axe."

Essex determined to pursue his advantage, by laying siege to Reading, as soon as the season of the year would admit of his taking the field.—Accordingly, on the fifteenth of April, he marched from Windsor with an army consisting of sixteen thousand foot and three hundred horse, and reached Henley the same night, from whence he pursued his march the next day, by Binfield-heath, towards Reading. The fortifications which surrounded the

1643

town were not sufficient to resist, for any length of time, a large army, and CHAP. II. being commanded by the neighboring hills, the result of a siege was easily foreseen; for this reason, it is said, his majesty had determined to withdraw his troops before the end of the month, had not the sudden arrival of Essex before the town prevented it. This was the more to be regretted, as the garrison was not provided with more than forty barrels of powder; but, as the town was well supplied with provisions, hopes were entertained, that the garrison, which consisted of picked men, would be able to hold out till the king came to its relief, especially as the parliament's forces consisted chiefly of young recruits, and the officers unacquainted with the methods of conducting a regular siege, this being the first that had been undertaken since the commencement of the war. Accordingly, as soon as Charles was informed of the designs of the enemy, he called in all his troops from the neighboring garrisons, in hopes of raising such a force, as might enable him at their head to relieve the garrison; and, in the mean time issued a proclamation offering "a free pardon to all that would lay down their arms, and return quietly to their respective homes." This, however, made no impression upon the minds of men who were become enthusiasts in the cause they had espoused, and which they were taught to consider as their own. Essex met with no opposition on his march, till he reached Caversham-hill, where the royalists had thrown up a slight entrenchment, which they defended 'till, being overcome by numbers, they were obliged to retire towards the church, which they had fortified; but the steeple being beaten down by the cannon of the enemy, they at length gave way, and, passing the bridge, were followed by Essex, who immediately encamped with his whole army in the meads on the west side of the road, where they threw up intrenchments; " " the soldiers. (says Vicars) being as willing to deal with the spade as the sword."

At the same time the lord Gray of Warwick, who commanded another division of the parliament's forces, sat down with seven thousand horse and foot on the south east side of the town. † All the avenues to the town, except on the west being thus shut up, and the garrison nearly confined to the limits of their own lines, Essex called a council of war, to consult, whether they should immediately storm the works, which would bring the siege to a speedy decision, or proceed by the slower, but more sure, means of taking the town by regular approaches. The officers of the cavalry were unanimous for storm-

<sup>\*</sup> These entrenchments are marked in the annexed plan, by dotted lines. † Probably on the top of Red-lane.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>a</sup> Clarendon's History of the Rebellion. <sup>2</sup> Codrington's Life of Essex,

CHAP. II. ing the works; but those of the infantry, considering the great sacrifice of men that must ensue in such an attempt, for which no success in the present state of the army could compensate, were for the other alternative. The majority of the court being of this opinion, the execution of it was entrusted to major-general Skipton, an old and experienced officer, who had formerly served in the Low Countries, and had lately been appointed to this rank by both houses of parliament.

Under his direction, batteries were erected on Caversham-hill; but, either from the distance at which they were placed, or from the unskilfulness of the engineers, very little damage was done either to the town, or the fortifications in the Forbury; and the only officer killed was lieutenant-colonel D'Ews, whose leg was shattered by a cannon-ball. Nevertheless sir Arthur Aston, to whom the government of the town had been entrusted by his majesty, probably in the hope of gaining time, till the king's arrival, from whom he expected to receive a supply of ammunition, of which the garrison was in great want, offered to capitulate, on condition, that he might be permitted to retire with his men, baggage, arms, and ammunition. But this was refused by Essex, who returned for answer, that he was not come merely for the purpose of recovering the town, but with the hope likewise of making the garrison prisoners of war.<sup>2</sup>

While this negotiation was carrying on, Essex had advanced his works to the south-west part of the town, and by that means had gained possession of the high ground leading to Castle-street, from whence every effort was made by the governor to dislodge him, but without effect.

The garrison had placed some ordnance on the tower of St. Giles's church to annoy the enemy, but this was beaten down, either from the batteries raised by the forces under Essex, or from those which had been planted on Red-lane-hill, by order of the lord Grey.

In addition to the batteries on that side the town, there were two very strong forts which defended the entrance towards the west. One of these, called Fort-royal, was, I believe, near the end of Coley-lane; the position of the other, called the Invincible Fort, at Harrison's-barn, is not so clearly pointed out, but I am inclined to think it was situated at Chapel-hill, now Town's-end, where was a strong brick and stone barn\* which flanked the Caversham-road,

<sup>\*</sup> This was originally St. Edmund's-chapel; after the reformation, it was called the King's-barn, and at this time was probably rented by one Harrison, a carpenter; it was taken down about 40 years ago, and re-built at Battle-farm, where it now stands.

<sup>1</sup> Ludlow's Memoirs.

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and was admirably placed to prevent the enemy from forcing his way into the CHAP.II. town, either by the Caversham or Pangbourn roads.

These forts greatly impeded the besiegers, and might have preserved the town, had not sir Arthur Aston, the governor, been wounded in the head, on the third day of the siege, by a splinter from one of the walls in the abbey, as he was standing in the court of guard. Though the wound did not prove mortal, his intellects were so much deranged by the blow, as to render him incapable of continuing the command, which devolved on colonel Fielding, as the oldest officer in the garrison. This accident was considered very detrimental to the royal cause, sir Arthur being looked upon as the best officer in the royal army, and, as such, the most feared by the enemy.\*

About this period, lieutenant-colonel Wilmot, with a party of horse, was sent by his majesty, from Oxford, to the relief of the garrison; this he effected, by throwing in a small supply of ammunition, with about 500 men, from Sonning, by means of the river, the town not being wholly invested on that side. But, sir William Waller having joined Essex with the forces under his command, that general was enabled to extend his lines more to the eastward of the town, so as to cut off all hopes from the garrison of receiving any more supplies from that quarter by means of the Thames. For which purpose he caused a battery to be erected on the bank of the Thames, in a farm yard now belonging to Mr. Maitland, and nearly opposite the principal works in the Forbury, some remains of which are still visible.

\* Sir Arthur Aston, knt. governor of the garrison of Oxford, was created doctor of physic, and was admitted with this clause: honoratissime domine tu dabis fidem ad observandum statuta, libertates et consuetudines hujus universitatis. This person was of an ancient and knightly family in Lancashire, a great traveller, and had spent most of his time in wars abroad; whence, coming in the beginning of the rebellion into England, with as many soldiers of note, as he could bring with him, joined himself and them, to his majesty's forces; commanded the dragoons at Edge-hill fight, and with them did excellent service. Afterwards, his majesty, having a great opinion of his valor, made him governor of the garrison at Reading, where he beat the earl of Essex thrice from the place, 'till having received a dangerous wound, was forced to devolve the command upon colonel Fielding, who afterwards surrendering that garrison to the parliament, upon easy terms, suffered much in his reputation. As for sir Arthur, who was lately made governor of the garrison of Oxford, being very cruel and imperious in the execution of that office, he broke his leg, by a fall from his horse, on Bullington-green, near Oxford, on the 19th September, 1644, and on the 25th December following, was discharged from his office, to the great rejoicing of the soldiers and others, in Oxford. Sir Arthur then had his broken leg cut off, to save his life, and in its place had one of wood put, so that being recovered, and fit to do his majesty farther service, he went, with the flower of the English veterans, into Ireland, where he became governor of Drogheda, but at length the garrison being overpowered, and taken by Oliver Cromwell and his forces, in September 1649, all the defendants were put to the sword, and Aston, the governor, (a zealous Roman Catholic) was hewn in pieces, and his brains beatout of his head, with his wooden leg. - Il ood's Athena.

<sup>1</sup> Clarendon's History of the Rebellion.

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However Fielding found means to inform his majesty, by frequent messages, of the state of the garrison; which determined him to hasten to their relief, with such troops as could be spared from Oxford; and to order prince Rupert, who was then at Litchfield, to join him with all the forces he had with him, as well as those he could collect by the way; and that Fielding might not surrender the town before his arrival, he sent one Flower, a servant of sir Lewis Dives, to inform Fielding of his coming, and of some ammunition he was forwarding to him. Flower found means, by swimming across the Thames in the night, to get into the town, and to deliver his message; but, endeavoring to return the same way, he was seized by some of Essex's patroles, as he was coming out of the water, and being interrogated, confessed all he knew; whereupon colonels Barclay and Holbourn's regiments were stationed to the westward of Caversham, on the road leading to Oxford, as an out-post to watch the motions of the enemy.\*

An attempt was made, about the same time, by a deserter from the lord Robert's regiment, to blow up the parliament's magazines in the camp; by setting fire to a train, laid for that purpose, to a barrel of gunpowder, for which he was to receive five guineas, but being discovered, he was immediately tried and executed.<sup>1</sup>

Essex, having information that the king was on his march, sent a party of horse, under the commands of colonels Middleton and Miles, to gain intelligence of his strength, and to throw as many obstacles in the way of his march as possible. These, falling in with the king's advanced guard, stationed at Dorchester, consisting of some regiments of horse and one of foot, under the command of colonel Vavasor, so completely surprised them, that one captain and sixty privates were taken prisoners, and about the same number were killed. His majesty's standard had nearly fallen into their hands; and captain Watson, his majesty's gentleman harbinger, was among the prisoners. They also took one hundred and forty horses, from "forty to fifty pounds value" each; but this value must certainly have been exaggerated, considering the low rate of money at that time, unless we suppose the war to have occasioned a disproportionate rise in the value of these useful animals.

News having been brought to Fielding of this defeat, which was erroneously asserted to have happened to the main body of the army, under Charles, who was advancing to the relief of the town, that commander inconsiderately hung out the white flag, and commissioners being sent in by Essex, a truce was

<sup>\*</sup> The main road to Oxford was, at this period, on the Oxfordshire side of the water.

1 Vicars,
2 Ibid.

agreed upon by both parties, to continue while the articles of capitulation CHAP. II. were drawing up.

This check, which Charles had received at Dorchester, did not, however, prevent his marching the next day to Wallingford, where he was joined by his nephews, Rupert and Maurice, with the troops under their command, making the whole of the forces, collected for the relief of the garrison, to consist of fortyfive troops of horse, with nine regiments of infantry, and twelve pieces of cannon. These were opposed at Caversham, by two regiments, under the command of the lord Robert, and colonel Barclay, which had sustained a principal share in the late action at Dorchester. These last were stationed on the right of Caversham bridge, having with them three divisions of the lord Robert's regiment, the other two being stationed on the left. In this situation, they waited the approach of the enemy, whose right column, consisting of about one thousand men, headed by the earl of Forth, were soon after seen marching down the hills, when, falling on the two divisions placed at the entrance of the bridge, they were so warmly received by this veteran corps, that after a short, but warm conflict, they were obliged to retreat, with the loss of a great number of their men. The lord Robert was not present at the commencement of the action, but came up in time to partake of the victory.

In this engagement, the king fought at the head of his troops with great gallantry, but finding all his efforts to gain the passage of the bridge to be ineffectual, he retreated with the remainder of his forces, to Caversham-house, then the seat of lord Craven, where Fielding, the same night, found means to attend him.

All the accounts we have of this engagement, coming from his majesty's enemies, they must be considered as very partial. It is hardly possible to suppose, that so large a force as we are told he brought with him, for the relief of the town, could have been defeated by only two regiments. Vicars, indeed, says, "it pleased the Lord, in the midst of the fight, to send among them a very violent and vehement shower of hail and rain, which the wind blew into the faces of the king's cavaliers, and greatly offended and molested them, while it was equally favorable to the parliament's forces, being in their backs."

But this miracle, which has been conveniently brought in by many historians, to account for the achievement of the most improbable victories, is not sufficient of itself, to account for a victory gained by such an inferiority of strength. We may, therefore, conclude, either that the disparity between the opposite forces was less, or that Charles had no serious intention of passing the bridge. If the advantage had been so much in favor of the parliament's forces, they certainly would not have suffered him to retreat, and to pass the night

CHAP. II. without molestation, within reach of their own batteries. The king is also said to have brought with him twelve pieces of cannon; but as little or no use appears to have been made of them in the engagement, I am inclined to think that his whole force consisted only of some regiments of horse, collected purposely for throwing some ammunition into the town, of which the garrison stood in great need; and that the attack on the bridge was only a feint to draw the attention of the enemy to that point, while several cart-loads of ammunition were conveved to the river side, and from thence carried by water to the town.

It is probable that Charles, when he made the attack on the bridge, was unacquainted with the truce which had lately been agreed upon between the generals on each side; and, for the better keeping whereof, hostages had been reciprocally given. Ignorant of this particular, he seems to have expected that the garrison would have seconded his efforts for their relief, by making a sally at the same time on the rear of the enemy; but, being disappointed in this expectation, and finding the bridge barricadoed, and defended by a strong force at each of its extremities, and so narrow as scarcely to admit of four men marching abreast of each other, he was compelled, as we have said, after a short but brisk action, to retreat to lord Craven's at Caversham-park.\*

This seeming breach of faith, on the part of his majesty, was often made use of by his enemies to his disadvantage; and, on his trial, the storming of Caversham-bridge was one of the principal charges brought against him, as having upon that occasion "made war upon his subjects."

At the conference which Fielding had with his majesty at lord Craven's, he informed him of the state of the garrison; that they were in treaty, and he believed might have very good conditions, with liberty to march out with all their arms and baggage. This news was so agreeable to the king, that, in the presence of prince Rupert, he told Fielding, if he could procure such terms, to accept them; the men and arms being all he wanted, as the loss of either might prove fatal to the cause, in the present situation of affairs.<sup>2</sup>

Thus authorised by his majesty, Fielding returned to the garrison, and the next morning the negotiation, which during the attack on the bridge had been interrupted, was renewed, and the capitulation signed on the 25th of April, after a siege of ten days; during which, the garrison, consisting of about 3000 men, with 22 pieces of ordnance, had gallantly defended the town against the attacks of an army, consisting of nearly 30,000 men; as, in addition to those already mentioned, must be added some regiments of dra-

Late the property of lord Cadogan, but now of major Charles Marsack.

Clarendon's History of the Rebellion.

goons, under the sheriff of London, and colonel Langham, who had joined CHAP. II. the besiegers previous to its surrender.

The following were the articles of capitulation:-

I. That the governor, commanders, and soldiers, both horse and foot, should march out, with colors flying, arms, and four pieces of ordnance, ammunition, bag and baggage, lighted match, bullet in mouth, drums beating, and trumpets sounding.

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- II. That they should have free passage to his majesty's city of Oxford, without interruption of any of the forces under the command of his excellency the earl of Essex, provided the said governor, commanders, and soldiers use no hostility until they come to Oxford.
- 111. That what persons were accidentally come to the town, and shut up by the siege, should have liberty to pass without interruption, such persons only excepted as had deserted from the army under the earl of Essex.
  - IV. That they should have 50 carriages for baggage, sick and wounded men.
- V. That the inhabitants of the town should not be prejudiced in their estates or persons, either by plundering or imprisonment, and that they who should leave the town, might have free leave and passage to go to what place they would, with their goods, within the space of six weeks after the surrender of the town.
- VI. That the garrison should quit the town by twelve of the clock the next morning; and that the earl of Essex should provide a guard, for the security of the soldiers when they began their march.

And lastly, that the outworks should immediately be given up, and three persons of quality, as pledges for the faithful performance of these articles.

These articles having been ratified by both parties, the garrison marched out at the time appointed, but, in passing the enemy's guard, they were not only grossly abused, but many of them were disarmed, and their baggage plundered, even in the presence of the commander in chief, who was unable to restrain the licentiousness of the soldiers.

This breach of the articles of capitulation, was afterwards pleaded as an excuse, for many acts of cruelty and injustice practised by the royalists on such of the contrary party as the chances of war threw into their power; which was again retaliated by their enemies, neither of them thinking themselves bound to a strict observance of those treaties which were made in the sequel\* of the contest.

<sup>\*</sup> He delivered up the town (Bristol), upon articles, which were not well kept, in retaliation, as they pretended, for the like breach of our's at the taking of Reading.—Ludlow's Memoirs.

<sup>1</sup> Robert Codrington's Life of Essex.

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CHAP. II. As soon as the garrison had joined the king at Nettlebed, he proceeded on his march to Oxford, where it was whispered about, among the officers and soldiers, that there had not been fair dealing, and that Reading had been betraved. Whereupon colonel Fielding, whose reputation as a soldier and a man of honor was called in question, requested his majesty to call a council of war, to investigate his conduct while in command, and to clear him from the imputation of treachery. This was the more necessary, as the soldiers in a disorderly manner, accused him, not only of betraying and delivering up the town to the enemy, but also " for having had frequent intercourse with the carl of Essex; and for hindering, and forbidding them, to issue out of the town to join the king, when he came to their relief, although the officers had drawn them up for that purpose."

> In consequence of these insinuations, and his own request, the colonel was put under arrest, in order to be tried by a court martial; his majesty being particularly incensed against him, for that clause in the third article, which gave leave to all who were accidentally come into the town, and detained by the siege, to pass without molestation, with an exception to the deserters from Essex's army, under color of which, several soldiers were taken after the surrender of the town, and shot: the natural consequence of civil war.

> Notwithstanding the able and spirited defence made by the colonel on his trial, so strong were the prejudices against him, that he was found guilty of disobeying orders, and thereupon sentenced to be beheaded; although he had his majesty's own sanction and approbation previously to his signing the treaty. For this reason, perhaps, it was not thought fit to put the sentence in execution; so that, after being respited from time to time, he at length received a free pardon; but, according to Clarendon, " he never wholly recovered the shock which his reputation felt in this affair."

> During the siege, the town itself suffered very little from the enemy's cannon, for excepting the injury done to the abbey, which was the principal point of attack, and the destruction of the tower of St. Giles's church, by cannon shot, we do not hear of any other material injury it received; three houses indeed were burnt down in Sievier-street; but this was occasioned rather by the carelessness of the soldiers, who were quartered in them, than by the fire of the enemy. The town was besides so well supplied with provisions, that when the parliament's forces took possession, "they found the butchers' stalls full of meat, there was plenty of beer and wine in all the taverns and ale-houses, and seventy quarters of oats, and fifty quarters of wheat in one

place of the town," so that it was supposed, if sir Arthur Aston had not been CHAP. II. disabled in the early part of the siege, the earl would not so soon, if at all, have gained possession of the place.\*

In confirmation of the above description of the siege of Reading, we shall add the following testimony of colonel Codrington, who was himself present at the siege, and consequently was best able to give a correct account of every transaction attending it:

"His excellency, the earl of Essex, about the middle of April 1643, did quit his winter quarters at Windsor, and advanced towards Oxford; he seemed to pass by Reading, to render that garrison more secure, and that the chiefest strength being gone, where the chiefest danger did appear, he might take Reading with the more ease and speed; having therefore wheeled about, he unexpectedly came and sat down before Reading, and sent his trumpeter to the governor, to surrender that town unto him, for the service of the king and parliament. Colonel Ashton, (Aston) who was governor of it, returned a stubborn answer; that he would either keep the town or starve, and die in it. Therefore his excellency, taking compassion of the women and children, which were to undergo the common danger, he sent unto the governor, that they might be suffered to come forth; but this also was refused by the colonel.

"Hereupon our soldiers began to entrench themselves, and daily to make their approaches nearer and nearer to the town; his excellency encamped on the west part thereof, betwixt Reading and Oxford, to prevent any relief that might come to it. The enemy had many strong out-works, and in the garrison were three thousand soldiers, besides townsmen; many pieces of ordnance, and great store of provision and ammunition. They had strongly fortified Caversham-hill, which commands the town; from this place they were beaten and driven nearer their works. This hill being gained, we raised our batteries on it, which much annoyed the enemy, who endeavouring to make several sallies, were always beaten in with loss. They planted some ordnance on a steeple, but our cannon were levelled against it with such dexterity, that both cannoneers and cannon were soon buried under the ruins. Our ordnance perpetually beating down the houses, and Ashton (Aston) the governor being wounded in the head by the fall of some bricks from a battered chimney, made him willing to surrender the town if his soldiers might march away with bag and baggage; but his excellency sent him word that he came for men, and not the town only.

"The king, resolving to raise the siege of Reading, marched from Oxford,

<sup>\*</sup> Sir Samuel Luke, the Hudibras of Butler, was with the parliament's army before the town, and is said to have written a journal of the siege.—Lyson's Britannia.

<sup>1</sup> Vicars.

CHAP. II. with nine regiments of horse and nine of foot, and twelve pieces of ordnance.

His excellency understanding that his majesty and the two German princes were with them in person, he ordered two regiments out to oppose them, which were those of the lord Roberts and colonel Barclay.

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"The fight began about Caversham-bridge, and on both sides great valor and resolution were expressed. After less than half an hour's fight, the enemy began to give ground, leaving about three hundred arms, and many of their men behind them; their horse also which came down the hill to assist the foot were gallantly repulsed. There were about one hundred of the enemy slain upon the spot, among whom was serjeant major Smith, in whose pockets were found good store of gold.

"The enemy being thus beaten in the field, retreated to Wallingford, and colonel Botles, lieutenant-colonel Thelwell and serjeant-major Gilby, were sent in by his excellency to treat for the surrender of the town; and lord Rochford, lieutenant-colonel Russel, and serjeant-major King, were given up as hostages for their safe return.

"On one of the king's standards, the invention was, the effigies of the parliament-house, with two traitors' heads on poles upon the top of it, with this inscription: Sicut extra, sic intus. (the same within, as without.) The parliament being so indignant at it, voted, that the author of it, whoever he might be, should be for ever banished the kingdom, as being unworthy to live in the English air."

Thus ended the siege of Reading,\* to the relief and satisfaction of the

#### \* Robert Codrington's Life of Essex.

<sup>\*</sup> The accounts of the siege of Reading, published at the time, are so vague and contradictory, that it is almost impossible, from them alone, to fix the situation of the besieging army with any certainty. Mr. Coates, following the Weekly Intelligencer, says, that "Essex marched from Windsor, by Loddon-bridge, and set down on the west-side of the town, where the works were weakest." But it must be evident, to every one acquainted with the country, that it was impossible for the army under Essex, to have reached the west-side of the town by that route, without either passing through it, which was impossible, or, by a circuitous march towards Whitley, to have encountered all the difficulties attending the march of an army, with their artillery and baggage, over a deep and rapid river, and through swampy meadows, intersected by wet ditches and brooks, and exposed the whole of the march, to a cross fire from the enemy's batteries at each extremity of the town. However, we are told, that the earl having, some how or other, got on the west side of the town, "secured a post at a knight's house, at about a mile's distance, \*" and afterwards attacked sir Chailes Blount's house,

<sup>\*</sup> One of the Blagrave family, which possessed the house alluded to, had, in a former reign, been knighted, but the person who then possessed the house, was only a country gentleman, as appears from a protection granted him by Charles, and now in the possession of J. Blagrave, esq. at Calcot. In this protection, his majesty "requires and commands all his loving subjects, to protect and defend John Blagrave, esq. and his wife, against the violence and oppression of all tebels and traitors."

inhabitants, who though they were at the time divided into parties, with the Chap. II. usual animosities against each other, yet the preservation of the place in the hands of the royalists, or the surrender of it to the parliament's forces, could be of trifling consideration, in comparison of what each must have endured, had the siege continued for a longer period.

at the distance of four miles from his position, and on the opposite side of the Thames, which, from its width at Mapledurham, we may suppose, could not have been easily passed; after this, the army possessed themselves of Caversham, thus completely reversing every operation of the siege. The account given by Vicars, and which I have principally followed, is much more consistent. He says, that the "general gave out he was going to lay siege to Oxford, to draw off his majesty's attention from the real object of his attack; and accordingly, at first, seemed to pass by Reading, (and this is confirmed by Codrington,) but suddenly wheeling about, he came and sat down before it." He had before secured Henley, which lay in his direct road to Oxford, and, to keep up the deception, followed the same way himself, thus seeming to pass by Reading. From Henley, he wheeled about to his destined object, and as the main road at that time passed through Binfield-heath, the first opposition he might be expected to meet with in his way, must have been at Caversham, where he fell in with the outpost, but these being driven back, were pursued over the bridge by the general, who immediately began to intrench his army in the meadows, on the west side the road. These lines are yet in tolerable preservation, and at their extremity is Battle-farm, belonging to sir Francis Knollys, the knight at whose house Essex took up his quarters. This account is plain and consistent, and removes many difficulties attending the other.

## History of Reading.

#### CHAPTER III.

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IMMEDIATELY on his taking possession of the town, Essex began to make preparations for undertaking the siege of Oxford, according to the plan laid down for him by the parliament; but was prevented from putting it into immediate execution, by an epidemic fever which broke out in the garrison, and which carried off great numbers of the men.\* so that it was nearly the end of July, before he was able to leave Reading with his army greatly reduced in number.†

Before his departure, having called together the members of the corporation, he commanded a very heavy contribution to be levied on the inhabitants for the payment of the soldiers, but it being found impossible to raise the money, a committee was appointed from their body "to wait on the lord general, and to inform him that the town was so much impoverished by the late siege, and the exactions of his majesty, that they were utterly unable to raise any more money among them." It is probable that this representation had its effect with the general, as no entry is made in the diary of any money being collected on this occasion.

Towards the end of the year, Essex being sent to the relief of Glocester; Charles was obliged to raise the siege of that city, and marched towards Newbury, in hopes of intercepting Essex on his return, whither that nobleman arrived on the 20th of September, and was surprised to find, that, by hasty marches, Charles had got possession of the town before him. Here he found himself under the necessity of coming to an engagement, which was the

<sup>\*</sup> On digging the foundation for the county bridewell, the north wing of which is built on the spot where the cemetary of the abbey church was, several human skeletons were discovered, some at the usual depth in the ground, others very near the surface, as if deposited in haste. Many of the bones were in a perfect state, and the teeth such as might be expected in young men who compose the principal part of an army, and were doubtless the remains of those who fell victims to this disorder, or were killed during the siege.

<sup>+</sup> Not long after the surrender of the town, it pleased Almighty God to visit the army of the parliament with sickness, by which many of our young men perished, and the rest, on account of their weakness, were disabled from doing much service in the field. Physic, and whatever else was thought expedient, was sent for from London, as well as money and clothes for the soldiers.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> Corporation Diary.

hottest that had hitherto taken place between the contending parties. Many noblemen and gentlemen, as well as privates, fell on both sides, and the victory, as is common in doubtful cases, was claimed by both parties, though the king's forces had evidently the advantage, as they kept possession of the town, while those of the parliament were obliged to pass the night in the open fields, in want of almost every necessary. However, early in the next morning, Essex ordered a gun to be fired, as a challenge to the enemy, which not being accepted, he immediately began his march towards Reading; this being perceived by the enemy, prince Rupert was ordered to follow him with one thousand musketeers and some troops of cavalry; who greatly impeded his march, by continually attacking his rear guard, so that it was late in the evening before he arrived at Englefield. The darkness of the night having occasioned some confusion in their march, through the narrow lanes between that village and Theale, the prince took advantage of their disorder, and falling upon them with his whole force, so increased the confusion, that the officers had no longer the command of their men, but each shifting for himself, took the different roads, and it was not 'till near ten o'clock at night, that Essex, with part of his army reached Theale. As it was, the slaughter was very great; and one of the lanes in the road to Englefield still retains the name of Deadmen's-lane, from the number of the dead that was afterwards found in it.

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Essex remained that night at Theale, and the next morning pursued his march unmolested to Reading. Here he remained several days, to recover his troops from the fatigue they had undergone from so long a march, after which he retired to his former quarters at Windsor, taking with him the garrison, to supply the deficiency in his army, occasioned by the loss it had sustained in the battle of Newbury, as well as in the different conflicts with prince Rupert, who had hung on their rear from Glocester to Theale. Charles no sooner heard that he had evacuated the town, than he sent Sir Jacob Ashley with two thousand five hundred men to take possession of it.

About this time the house of commons determined to bring archbishop Laud to trial, he being considered as the principal instigator of the arbitrary measures pursued by the king, which had involved the nation in all the horrors of civil war. He had been committed to the Tower, on the commencement of the troubles, and on the 25th of April, 1642, was fined in the sum of twenty thousand pounds, in virtue of a bill that had passed both houses of parliament, for the punishing the late members of the convocation; and Mr. Pym, in the name of the commons, exhibited fourteen articles of accusation

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against him at the bar of the house of lords, but these had been suffered to lie dormant 'till the 23d of October 1643, when being again presented at the bar of the house by Mr. Wilde, a serjeant at law, together with ten additional articles, he was ordered by the lords to give in his answer within seven days, but by the great number of petitions he presented to the house, and the expedients his counsel furnished him with for the sake of delay, in hopes no doubt that some favorable occurrence might happen in his majesty's favor, which he might take advantage of, he found means to put off his appearance 'till the 12th of March following, when, says the historian, " he replied to each separate article, and made as full, as gallant, as pithy a defence, and spake as much for himself as was possible for the wit of man to invent, and that with so much vivacity, oratory, audacity and confidence, that he shewed not the least acknowledgment of guilt, in any of the particulars that were charged against him." Indeed the commons seemed to have been convinced that they should not be able to convict him of the treason wherewith he was charged, from either of the articles taken separately, and accordingly had recourse to a bill of attainder, which was carried through the house with only one dissenting voice, at the very time that Laud was making his defence before the lords, and as the bill was founded on all the articles taken collectively, it was presumed such strong evidence would not be required to convict him, as if they were taken separately.

The bill being sent up to the lords, they, after some time, requested a conference with the commons, in which they informed them, that they found the archbishop guilty of the articles as to matter of fact, but requested further satisfaction whether they amounted to treason in point of law. The commons endeavored to satisfy them as to the point of law, but suspecting by the dilatory manner of their proceedings, that they meant to skreen him from punishment, they had recourse to their former practices, and by their emissaries procured subscriptions to be set on foot, and petitions presented to themselves, from the citizens of London and others, in which they were requested to proceed with vigour against all delinquents. These proceedings so intimidated the lords, that the greater part of them are said to have withdrawn from the house, when the remainder, only seven or eight in number, passed the bill without any amendments.

When the archbishop was informed by the lieutenant of the tower, that the bill was passed, "he neither entertained the news with stoical apathy, nor waited his fate with weak and womanish lamentations; but heard it with so

<sup>\*</sup> Heylin's Life of archbishop Laud.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup> Clarendon's History of the Rebellion.

even and smooth a temper, as shewed he neither was ashamed to live, nor afraid to die. The time between the sentence and execution he spent in prayer and application to the Lord his God. For so well was he studied in the art of dying, that by continual fastings, watchings, prayers, and such like acts of christian humiliation, his flesh was rarified into spirit, and the whole man so fitted for eternal glories, that he was more than half in heaven, before death brought his bloody but triumphal chariot to convey him thither." When sentence was passed upon him, he produced a pardon, signed by his majesty in the preceding April, but this being voted of no effect by his unrelenting persecutors, he was ordered to be executed as a traitor to his country, in the January following. In the mean time he petitioned the two houses, that the manner of his execution might be changed to decapitation, and that some of his own chaplains might be admitted to attend him, both before, and at the time of his execution. These requests were readily granted by the peers, but the commons refused both, only sending him two ministers whom he did not ask for. The next day he presented another petition for decapitation, on the ground that he was a divine, a bishop, a privy counsellor, and a peer; whereupon the commons were at last induced to consent to his being beheaded.

whereupon the commons were at last induced to consent to his being beheaded.

Accordingly, on the 10th of January, he was brought upon the scaffold on Tower-hill, when he addressed the spectators in a long speech, or rather sermon, taking his text from Hebrews, xii, 2. "Let us run with patience the race that is set before us, looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith; who for the joy that was set before him, endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God."

In this speech, he declared his abhorrence of the crime of treason, and added, "in my answer at the bar of the house of lords, to the several charges brought against me, I protested my innocency, but it has been said, that prisoners' protestations at the bar must not be taken. I can bring no witness of my heart, and the intention thereof; I must therefore, come to my protestation, not at the bar, but my protestation of this hour, and instant of my death, in which I hope all men will be such charitable christians, as not to think I would die and dissemble, being instantly to give an account of the truth of it. I do therefore here, in the presence of God, and his holy angels, take it upon my death, that I never intended the subversion of law or religion; and I desire you all to remember this protest of mine for my innocency in this, and from all treasons whatsoever. I have been accused also as an enemy to parliaments; no, I understand them, and the benefit that comes by them, too

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well, to be so. But I did mislike the misgovernment of some parliaments many ways, and I had good reason for it; for corruptio optimi, est pessima; there is no corruption in the world so bad, as that which is of the best things within itself, for the better a thing is in nature, the worse it is corrupted. And that being the highest court, over which no other has jurisdiction, when it is misinformed or misgoverned, the subject is left without all remedy. But I have, done, I forgive all the world, all, and every of those bitter enemies which have prosecuted me, and humbly desire to be forgiven of God first, and then of every man whether I have offended him or not, if he do but conceive that I have. Lord, do thou forgive me! And I beg forgiveness of him. And so I heartily desire you to join in prayer with me."

He then prayed aloud for some time; which done, he called the executioner to him, and said, "here honest friend, God forgive thee, and I do, and do thy office upon me with mercy." He then kneeled down, and after a short prayer, laid his head upon the block, exclaiming, Lord receive my soul! which was the signal to the executioner, who at one blow severed his head from his body.

Thus fell archbishop Laud,\* a man endowed by nature with great abilities, but these were counterbalanced by an unbounded ambition, and an inflexible severity. Though born in rather an obscure station, he raised himself to the highest office in the church, and was supposed to have had a great influence in the civil administration of the country, from the deference paid him by the monarch. Had he been more moderate in his political conduct, and less bigoted in his religious tenets, the country might have derived considerable advantage from his great abilities, and the power which fortune had placed in his hands. But he no sooner became archbishop of Canterbury, than he dis-

\* The following inscription is round the frame of his picture in the council-chamber:

To the Memory of Dr. William Laud, Arch Bishop of Cant; who was a Liberal Benefactor to this Town, which was honored with his Birth:

After he had many years served the Church, under the Defenders of the Faith; King James, and King Charles the Martyr:

He was solemnly murdered by a faction of Rebells, upon Tower-hill, London, the 10th day of January,

A. D. MDCXLIIII, Aetatis suæ LXXIIII.

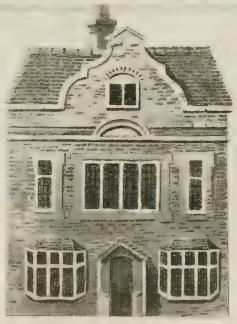
The gift of Dr. Peter Mews. Vicar of St. Maries
Reading, and Arch Deacon of Berks, 1667.

Heylin's Life of Archbishop Laud.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup> Hume's History of England.



ARCHBISHOP LAYD, FROM THE ORIGINAL IN THE COUNCIL CHAMBER.



His house in Broad Street



gusted the major part of the nation by the severity he used against every denomination of dissenters, who in return accused him of a desire to introduce the exploded doctrines of popery; as a proof of which, they asserted, that the windows in Lambeth chapel, had, by his order, been ornamented with paintings in glass, among which was a representation of God the father, in the form of a little old man in a blue coat; this Laud excused by saying, that God was in scriptures styled "the ancient of days." But what seemed most to confirm the general opinion, was the manner of his consecrating the new church of St. Catherine, which we shall quote from one of our ablest historians.

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"On the bishop's approach to the west door of the church, a loud voice cried, Open, open, ye everlasting doors, that the king of glory may enter in! Immediately the doors of the church flew open, and the bishop entered. Falling upon his knees, with eyes elevated, and arms expanded, he uttered these words: This place is holy, the ground is holy: In the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, I pronounce it holy.

"Going towards the chancel, he several times took up from the floor some of the dust, and threw it in the air. When he approached, with his attendants, near to the communion-table, he bowed frequently towards it: And on their return, they went round the church, repeating as they marched along, some of the psalms: And then said a form of prayer, which concluded with these words: We consecrate this church, and separate it unto thee, as holy ground, not to be profaned any more to common uses.

"After this, the bishop standing near the communion table, solemnly pronounced many imprecations upon such as should afterwards pollute that holy place, by musters of soldiers, or keeping in it profane law-courts, or carrying burdens through it. On the conclusion of every curse, he bowed towards the east, and cried, Let all the people say, amen.

"The imprecations being all so piously finished, there were poured out a number of blessings, upon such as had any hand in framing and building that sacred and beautiful edifice, and on such as had given, or should hereafter give to it, any chalices, plate, ornaments, or utensils. At every benediction, he in like manner bowed towards the east, and cried, Let all the people say, amen.

"The sermon followed: after which, the bishop consecrated the sacrament in the following manner:

"As he approached the communion table, he made many lowly reverences: And coming up to that part of the table where the bread and wine lay, he

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" Next he laid his hand on the cup, which had a cover upon it, and was filled with wine: He let go the cup, fell back, and bowed thrice towards it. He approached again; and lifting up the cover, peeped into the cup. Seeing the wine, he let fall the cover, started back, and bowed as before. Then he received the sacrament, and gave it to others. And many prayers being said, the solemnity of the consecration ended. The walls and roof of the fabric were then supposed to be sufficiently holy."

These superstitious ceremonies did in appearance warrant his enemies in the charge they brought against him, of his endeavouring to introduce popery, though it is certain he differed from that church in many of its essentials, as may be seen in his conference with Fisher the jesuit, and the pains he took in bringing over many of that communion to the church of England. But though he must be acquitted of that charge, yet his conduct shews, that he was arbitrary in his principles, and carried the authority of the starchamber, while he presided in it, to a greater extent than any of his predecessors, and did not scruple to make use of it in vindication of himself, whenever an opportunity offered of puting it in practice, as may be seen by the following instances still on record.

One Bowyer, a gentleman's servant, coming to Reading soon after Laud's elevation to the see of Canterbury, gave out, "that the archbishop was confined to his house at Fulham, where twenty-four of the guards, twelve by night, and twelve by day, were set to watch him. That his confinement was for four points of high treason, which he affirmed to be these: 1st, That the said archbishop was an armenian; 2d, that he had sent letters to the pope; 3d, that the archbishop said, that the midwife of the virgin Mary, was a mediatrix to our saviour; 4th, that the virgin Mary was no human creature. And also affirmed, that he had seen four letters, written with the archbishop's own hand; which were to be sent to Rome, two to the pope, and two to cardinal Blunt, the substance whereof was, as he affirmed, that the said archbishop was ready to do for those at Rome what was in his power, and that they should direct their letters to the queen of England's court. That the said archbishop would be an agent to them, to send letters back again. That the archbishop preached a sermon before the king in Scotland, that was fit to be preached before the pope, and that he was reproved for the same, in a sermon preached by bishop Hambleton, before his majesty. That the archbishop allowed five Char. hundred pounds a year of his own means to the pope, and that seventeen thousand pounds a year was also allowed the pope by his means."

Being brought to trial before the high court of star-chamber' for this offence, he was sentenced, "to be committed to bridewell, there to be kept to hard labor during his life, and never to be suffered to go abroad; he was also fined in the sum of three thousand pounds, and ordered to be set in the pillory at Westminster, with a paper on his head, declaring his offence, and there to acknowledge and confess the same. To be set in the pillory at Cheapside, with the like paper, and there make the like submission and acknowledgment, and to be burnt in the forehead, with the letters L and R, and to be set in the pillory at Reading, with the like paper, and both his ears to be nailed thereto, and to make the like submission and acknowledgement as before."2

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Though the offence committed by this man must be allowed to have been very provoking, yet the feelings of every humane person must revolt at the severity of his punishment, inflicted it is true, under the appearance of justice, but in reality dictated by revenge. If, however, some excuse may be pleaded in behalf of Laud, from the aggravating nature of the offence in this case, which was wholly personal; yet even that apology cannot be admitted in the following one, the only offence committed by the sufferer, being a compliance with his master's order, in carrying an engraved letter to the printer's, when Mr. Prynne was publishing his Histrio-Mastix. Mr. Prynne had got the first letter of the work, which happened to be a C, ornamented in a peculiar style, so as to represent several objects, this he sent by his scrvant, N. Wickens, to the printer; for which supposed crime Wickens was afterwards tried by the high commission court at Lambeth, as appears from his subsequent petition to the house of commons, wherein he states, that "he had been excommunicated by the court, and fined one thousand pounds on several articles to this effect: We object to you N. Wickens, that you know or believe, that the letter, which you carried to the printer, to be set the first letter upon the book, was a very complete letter, and so artificially cut, as that to look on it the usual way, it seemed a complete and perfect C, but turned one side of it, and it appeared a pope's head, and then turned another way, and there appeared an army of men or soldiers. And we require you to declare, by virtue of your oath, to your best knowledge and belief, who or what was meant by the pope's head, in the said letter or scal? and who or what by the army of soldiers? and who by the letter C? and whether by the C was meant his grace of Canterbury? and by the pope's

<sup>1</sup> Star Chamber Reports, 9th of Charles I.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup> Rushworth's Collections.

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head, that his grace was meant? and that by the army of men or soldiers was meant, that his grace would be the cause of wars in this kingdom about religion, or some other like meaning or device?" For this supposed offence, Wickins was sentenced to pay a fine of one thousand pounds with cost of suit, was excommunicated, and committed to prison, there to remain in safe custody 'till further order should be taken by the court.

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We shall conclude this account of Laud with the following extracts from contemporary authors, which if read with proper allowances for private pique, and party prejudices, may enable the reader to form a general estimate of his character. Archbishop Abbot,\* his predecessor in the see of Canterbury, describes him "as the only inward counsellor of Buckingham, sitting with him sometimes privately whole hours, and feeding his humors with malice and spite. His life in Oxford was to pick quarrels in the lectures of the public readers, and to advertise them to the then bishop of Durham, that he might fill the cars of king James with discontent against the honest men that took pains in their places, and settled the truth (which he called puritanism) in their auditors."

"He made it his work to see what books were in the press, and to look over epistles dedicatory, and prefaces to the reader, to see what faults might be found.

"It was an observation, What a sweet man this was like to be! That the first observable act that he did was the marrying of C. Blunt, esq. of Devonshire to lady Rich (wife of the earl of Warwick, who was then alive) when it was notorious to the world that she had another husband, and the same a nobleman, who had divers children by her then living.

"King James did for many years take this so ill, that he would never hear of any great preferment of him, insomuch that the bishop of Lincoln, doctor Williams, who taketh upon him to be the first promoter of him, hath many times said, that when he made mention of Laud to the king, his majesty was so averse from it, that he was constrained oftentimes to say, 'that he would never desire to serve that master which could not remit one fault of his servant.'

"Well! in the end, he did conquer it, to get him to the bishoprick of St. David's, which he had not long enjoyed, but he began to undermine his benefactor, as at this day it appeareth.

"The countess of Buckingham told Lincoln, that St. David's was the

<sup>\*</sup> Abbot had been suspended from his office, at the instigation of Laud, (as he supposed,) for not licensing Sibthop's and Manwaring's Sermons, in favor of the general loan demanded by his majesty.

4 Wickins's petition to the House of Commons.

man that undermined him with her son. And verily, such is his aspiring nature, that he will underwork any man in the world, so that he may gain by it."

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Clarendon observes, that "let his favorites say what they will, he was one of the chief authors of the troubles that in his time afflicted England, first, by supporting with all his power, the arbitrary principles which the court strove for several years to establish: secondly, by a too rigid observance of trifles in the divine service, and by the compelling every one to conform thereto."

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"His diary (says Rushworth) shews him to have been superstitious, and a regarder of dreams, but in the main he was a learned, sincere, and zealous man, humble in his private deportment, but withal hot and indiscreet.

"Among other works of piety and magnificence, he built a court at St. John's college, Oxford. Procured from Charles I. for the clergy in Ireland, all the impropriations then remaining in the crown. Got commendams annexed to the bishoprics of the new foundation. Obtained very ample charters for the universities of Oxford and Dublin, and regulated the statutes of the former, where he founded an Arabic lecture."

Wood, in his Athenæ, gives the following epitome of his life:

66 William Laud, son of William Laud by Lucia his wife, widow of John Robinson of Reading, and daughter of John Webbe of the same place, was born in St. Lawrence's parish on the 7th of October 1573, educated in the free school there, elected fellow of St. John's college 1590, was made fellow in 1594, and four years after, master of arts. About that time he read the divinity lecture newly set up in the college, and maintained by one Mrs. May. In 1603, he was elected one of the proctors of the university, and became chaplain to the earl of Devonshire. In 1604, he was admitted to the reading of the sentences, and in 1607, he became vicar of Stamford in Northamptonshire. In the year following he proceeded D. D. and was made chaplain to doctor Neale, bishop of Rochester. In 1609, he became rector of West Tilbury in Essex, for which he exchanged his advowson of North Kileworth in Leicestershire. The next year his patron the bishop of Rochester gave him the rectory of Kuckstone in Kent, but that place proving unhealthy to him, he left it, and was inducted into Norton by proxy. This year 1610, he resigned his fellowship, and the next was elected president of his college. In 1614, his patron, then bishop of Lincoln, gave him a prebendship in that church, and after that the archdeaconry of Huntingdon in 1615. In the year 1616, the king gave him the deancry of Gloucester, and the year following he became rector of Ibstock in Leicestershire. In 1620, January 22d, he was installed canon or prebendary of the 8th stall in the church of Westminster, and the next year, his majesty (who upon his own confession had given him nothing

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CHAP. but the deanery of Gloucester, which he well knew was a shell without a kernel) gave him the bishopric of saint David's, and leave to hold his presidentship of saint John's college in commendam with it, as also the rectory of Ibstock before mentioned, and Creek in Northamptonshire. In September 1626, he was translated to Bath and Wells, and about that time made dean of the royal chapel. In 1627 he was sworn a privy counsellor, and on the 15th of July 1628 was translated to London, much about which time his old acquaintance sir James Whitlock, a judge, used to say of him, that 'he was too full of fire, though a just and good man, and that his want of experience in state matters, and his too much zeal for the church, and heat, if he procceded in the way he was then in, would set this nation on fire.' In 1630 he was elected chancellor of the university of Oxford, and in September 19, 1633, he was translated to Canterbury, which high preferment drew upon him such envy, that, by the puritans in the beginning of the long parliament, he was impeached of high treason. He was an encourager of learning, a stiff maintainer of the rights of the church, and clergy, and one that did honor to the university and his country. Such a liberal benefactor was he also towards the advancement of learning, that he left little for his own use, and that if the severe stroke of the rebels had not untimely cut him off, St. Paul's cathedral had silenced the fame of ancient wonders, our English clergy had been the glory of the world, the Bodleian library in Oxford had daily outstripped the Vatican, and his public structures had overtopped the Escurial. Whoseever will read over the breviate or diary of his life and actions, penned by himself for private use, will find that he was a man of such eminent virtues, such exemplary piety, such unwearied fidelity to his sovereign, of such public soul towards the church and state, of so fixed a constancy in what he undertook, and so little biassed in his private interests, that Plutarch, if he were alive, would be much troubled to find a sufficient parallel wherewith to match him in all the lineaments of public virtue. This breviate was a pocket book, which he had written in Latin, but restless Prynne having had a hint of it, obtained an order from the committee of lords and commons, appointed for the safety of the kingdom, dated 30th of May 1643, to seize upon his papers, letters, &c. by virtue of which, he, with others, repaired to the tower, the next morning early, and rushing suddenly into his chamber before he was stirring, went directly to his breeches lying by the bed side, and thrusting his hand into his pocket, took the said breviate out, and published it, in order to render the archbishop more odious to the mobile than before. In the beginning of the civil wars, he was, upon suspicion of introducing popery into the kingdom, arbitrary government, &c. committed, first, prisoner to the black rod,

and afterwards to the tower: Where remaining about four years, he was by the votes of a thin house beheaded on Tower-hill the 10th of January 1644, and his body buried in the chancel of the church of Allhallows, Barkin, which he before had consecrated, but was on the 24th of July 1663, deposited in a little brick vault near the high alter of St. John's college chapel, Oxford, after he had lived 71 years 13 weeks and 4 days."

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Though from the discordant opinions given of the archbishop, by the authors above quoted, it may be difficult to trace his true character with any certainty, yet we may conclude from their general testimony, that he was a sound divine, and a zealous defender of the church over which he presided. If in the pursuit of this object he deviated too much from those general principles of humanity which ought to have guided his conduct, it should be remembered, how much the minds of men were at that time soured by controversy, and the struggle for supremacy in the church. Persecution, for the sake of religion, was become an inherent principle with all sects when in power, and the putting it in force was so far from being thought criminal by any, that it was in general considered as a duty they were bound to perform, for the salvation of souls.

He was an encourager of literature and of learned men, and the sums he expended in the purchase of valuable books and MSS. for the promotion of knowledge, shew that if not a proficient in learning himself, he sat a just value on the advantage to be derived from it, and was willing to promote it to the utmost of his power.\*

If his religion was tinctured with bigotry and superstition, some allowance should be made for the prejudices of the age. When witchcraft, judicial astrology, divination by dreams, omens, &c. were considered as true as "holy writ," it cannot surely be wondered at, if Laud joined in the belief of them in common with his contemporaries.

As a member of the administration, he was arbitrary, cruel, and oppressive; and from the confidence placed in him by Charles, is generally supposed to have prompted the unfortunate monarch to the commission of those unjustifiable measures in support of his prerogatives, which brought on the civil war, and ended in the ruin both of the church and state, which he had so unjudiciously endeavored to promote. In a printed paper which he left behind him, he excuses himself by alleging, that "he was but one of many, who either in council,

Laud was a lover of and encourager of learning, and learned men. His MSS. bequeathed to the Bodleian Library, and his printed books, in the library of St. John's college, Oxford, sufficiently attest this. In the archives of the latter, is the cap, which the archbishop wore at his execution, shewing the cut of the axe, which severed his head from his body.—Rev. T. F. Dibdin.

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this is a poor excuse for an arch-bishop to say, that he only followed others in vice, whom it was his duty to have led in the paths of virtue. Raised from a comparatively low condition to the highest offices in church and state, he is said to have so far forgot himself, as to treat his inferiors and dependants with haughtiness very unbecoming the character of a bishop;\* while to his superiors or those who could promote his interest, he was altogether as humble. He certainly possessed many virtues, amidst a variety of errors which tarnished their lustre; and though for that reason we may not allow him to have been a good man, we must acknowledge that he was a great one, and deserved a better fate than what he met with from his persecutors in the two houses of parliament.

While Laud was a prisoner in the tower, Mr. Prynne took his diary out of his pocket, which he afterwards published, from which we have made the following extracts:

July 1589, I came a poor scholar to Oxford.

June 1590, chosen a scholar of St. John the Baptist's college.

June 1593, admitted a fellow thereof.

June 1594, bachelor of arts.

July 1599, master of arts.

June 4, 1600, I was made deacon.

April 5, 1601, a priest, by doctor Young, bishop of Rochester.

December 26, 1605, being the earl of Devonshire's chaplain, married this earl to the lady Rich, at Wanstead, in Essex.

November 16, 1607, I was invested into the vicarage of Stanford, in Northamptonshire.

September 17, 1609, I preached my first sermon to king James, at Theobald's.

August 4, 1633, There came one to me at Greenwich, that offered me to be a cardinal. I went presently to the king, and acquainted him with the thing and person.

News came to court of the lord archbishop of Canterbury's death, and the king resolved presently to give it me, which he did August 6.

August 17, I had a serious offer made me again to be a cardinal. I was then from court, but so soon as I came thither, I acquainted his majesty with

<sup>\*</sup>A poor curate, once having waited a long while to speak with the archbishop of Canterbury, at last obtained an audience. In their discourse, the great metropolitan told him, he was an idle fellow; to whom the curate replied, "it is most true, my lord, for had I not been so, I could not have spared so many idle hours to attend upon your grace to such small purpose."—Life of Laud.

<sup>1</sup> Rushworth's Collections.

it; but my answer again was, that somewhat dwelt within me, which would CHAP. not suffer that 'till Rome were other than it is.

III.

When first I went to Lambeth, my coach, horses, and men, sunk to the bottom of the Thames, in the ferry-boat, which was overladen; but I praise God for it, I lost neither man nor horse.

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November 13. About the beginning of this month, the lady Davis prophesied against me, that I should very few days outlive the 5th of November; and a little after that, one Green came unto the court at St. James's, with a great sword by his side, swearing the king should do him justice against me. All the wrong I ever did this man, was, that being a poor printer, I procured him of the company of stationers, £5 a year, during his life. God forgive me and him. He was committed to Newgate.

November 24, I christened king Charles' second son, James duke of York, at St. James's.

May 13, 1634, I received the seals of my being chosen chancellor of the university of Dublin, on the 14th September, 1633.

March 14, 1634-5, I was named one of the commissioners for the exchequer.

August 19, 1636, king Charles, and queen Mary entered Oxford, being to be there entertained by me as chancellor of the university.

August 30, I entertained them at saint John's college. Charles prince elector palatine, and his brother Rupertus was there, and with other nobles were made masters of arts.

March 11, 1637, Archibald, the king's fool, said to me, as I was going to the council, "Whea's the feule now? Doth not your grace hear the news from Striveling about the liturgy?" This I complained of, and the following order was issued.

"It is this day ordered by his majesty, by advice of the board, that Archibald Armstrong, the king's fool, for certain scandalous words of a high nature, spoken by him against the archbishop of Canterbury, shall have his coat pulled over his head, and discharged the king's service, and banished the court." And the same was immediately put in execution.

May 9, 1640. At midnight, my house at Lambeth was beset with five hundred persons of the rascal routous multitude. I had notice, and strengthened the house as well as I could, and, God be blessed, I had no harm. Since that I have cannons, and fortified my house as well as I can, and hope all may be safe; but yet libels are continually set up in all places of note in the city.

May 21. One of the chiefs being taken, was condemned at Southwark, and hanged and quartered on Saturday following.

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Oct. 27. I went into my upper study to see some MSS. which I was sending to Oxford. In that study hung my picture taken by the life, and coming in, I found it fallen down upon the face, and lying on the floor, the string being broken by which it hanged against the wall. I am almost threatened every day with my ruin in parliament. God grant this be no omen.

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December 18, I was accused by the house of commons of high treason, and committed to the gentleman usher.

December 21, I was fined five hundred pounds, and the lords ordered me presently to pay the money, which was done. I was forced to sell plate to pay where I borrowed.

February 26, 164?. This day I had been full ten weeks in restraint at Mr. Maxwell's house. I had favor of the lords not to go to the tower 'till the Monday following.

March 1. 1 went in Mr. Maxwell's coach to the tower. No noise 'till I came to the end of Cheapside, but from thence to the tower, I was followed and railed at by the rabble in multitudes, to the very tower gates, where I left them, and thank God, he made me patient.

## History of Reading.

## CHAPTER IV.

AFTER the death of Laud, nothing particular occurred at Reading (of CHAP. which the king's troops still kept possession) 'till the next year; when the parliament's forces, being united under Essex and Waller, with an intent to besiege Oxford, his majesty found himself under the necessity of concentrating his own army, by dismantling some of his garrisons. For this purpose he came to Reading early in the spring, and after ordering all the works to be demolished, he withdrew the garrison to Oxford. This measure, which secured the inhabitants from the dread of undergoing a second siege, did not free them from the insolence of the disorderly soldiery, who, immediately after the king's departure, took possession of the town, and demanded free quarters. This demand, made at the point of the bayonet, they were so far obliged to comply with, as to order an assessment to be made on the most opulent house-keepers, for the purpose of paying these freebooters the following sums per week: To the sergeants 5s. 6d. drummers 4s. soldiers 2s. 8d. and those who refused to pay the assessment, were to have soldiers quartered on them 'till they complied.1

A party of 120 horse came from Wallingford and Donnington, to gather contributions near Reading, when colonel Baxter, with 30 horse, marched after them, beat up their rear, but they facing about, one of Baxter's men was slain, and twenty wounded and taken; however a troop of 100 horse, who by accident quartered at Reading, coming up to the relief of Baxter, they in their turn routed the enemy, recovered all the prisoners, took 25 men, with captain Barker, their commander, and 50 horses. 2

On the 8th of September, the earl of Manchester was with the parliamentary army at Reading, and on the 15th of next month Cromwell entered the town, with his regiment of horse, at which time the earl of Manchester marched from Reading to Aldermaston, but returning on the 23d of November following, they kept possession of the town till the 24th of December following, when major Crawford marched out of the town with 4000 horse and foot to the relief of Abugdon. In the following month it was again visited

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by the army, when orders were issued for martial law to be enforced on all the inhabitants, as well here as at Henley.

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The committee for secluding unfit ministers from their livings, sat this year at Reading, as appears from the register of West Isley, in this county, wherein is the following entry:

"The committee for the county of Berks, sitting at Reading 13 April 1646.

Whereas Dr. Goodman, late bp. of Glousester hath held in commendam the rectory of the parish church of West Ildesley, in the county of Berks, and is a notorious delinquent to the parliament, it is therefore ordered by this committee, that the said rectory and the profits thereof, be sequestered from the said Dr. Goodman, and that Humphry Newberry and Mr. Artes, a goodly and orthodox divine be forthwith placed, and settled to officiate the cure of the said church, as the minister and rector thereof, and to enjoy the parsonage house, glebe lands, and all and singular the tithes, rents, duties and other profits thereof belonging.

TANFIELD VATCHELL,
DANIEL BLAGRAVE,
GEORGE WOOLDRIDGE,

FRANCIS PIKE,
JOHN BLAGRAVE."

1647

The army having got the king in their power, after he was delivered up by the Scotch, to whose protection he had surrendered himself, marched with him to Reading, where they took up their head quarters, under sir Thomas Fairfax, and placed his majesty under a guard at the house of lord Craven, at Caversham. Here he was treated in the most respectful manner by Fairfax, who then commanded the army, and obtained his permission, for his children to visit him, "so that there was a gallant court, and his majesty very cheerful, being attended by many brave gallants." This cheerfulness which his majesty exhibited at this time, was probably occasioned by the apparent kindness he experienced from all the officers of the army, particularly from Cromwell, who told sir John Barclay, one of his majesty's attendants, that " he had lately seen the tenderest sight that ever his eyes beheld, which was, the interview between the king and his children, that he wept plentifully at the remembrance thereof, saying, that never man was so abused as he in his sinister opinion of the king, who he thought was the most upright and conscientious of his kingdom; that they of the independent party had infinite obligations to him, for not consenting to the propositions sent to him at Newcastle, which would have totally ruined them, and which his majesty's interest seemed to invite

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup> Private letters from the army.

him to; concluding with this wish, ' that God would be pleased to look upon him, according to the sincerity of his heart towards the king.'\*1

CHAP. IV.

1649

When the peace of the country was restored, by the melancholy death of the monarch, and the dispersion of his adherents, the new government compelled the royalists to compound for their estates, which were supposed to be forfeited, for their adherence to their sovereign, and commissioners were sent round the country to regulate the proportion each individual should pay. In the list of the compounders returned to government, are the following gentlemen of this town:

0 80

Dr. Thomas Bunbury 117 0 0 1 Edward Hamlyn Mr. Anthony Braxton 100 0 0 | Christopher Miltons 4 Thomas Reeves 160 John Fartham

The taxes at this period were collected weekly; those for the support of government, were thirty-seven pounds eleven shillings, and towards carrying on the war in Ireland, nine pounds four shillings and eight pence three farthings. The committee for Berkshire also applied to the corporation for a loan of two hundred and forty pounds, but as they were not able to raise the money, their request could not be complied with.

During Cromwell's administration the taxes were considerably increased, Cromwell but as the trade of the town increased in proportion with them, the burthen was not so oppressive to the people, so that at the restoration it had nearly recovered its trade and its opulence.

11.

In 1663, when Charles II. with his queen, passed through the town, the Charles corporation presented his majesty with 50 pieces of gold, the queen with 30; and 371.6s. was paid as fees to their servants. During this reign the internal repose appears to have been for a long time disturbed, by party feuds and animosities, which frequently broke out into open acts of violence. bers of the church of England could not forget the persecutions they had suffered from the dissenters, when in power; nor could the latter help regretting the influence they had lost in the state, by the restoration. Each had become persecutors in turn, and nothing but the misguided conduct of James II. in

1660.

+ Ex-rector of St. Mary's, in this town.

‡ A member of the corporation, who had served the office of mayor.

<sup>\*</sup> When Cromwell first heard of the king's capture, he started up with savage exultation, exclaiming,-" Then I have the parliament in my pocket."-Stace's Cromwelliana.

Brother to John Milton, author of Paradise Lost. His father, Mr. John Milton, resided with him here till about this period, when he went to live with his son John, in Aldersgate street, Lone don, where he died .- Bishop Newton's Life of Milton.

<sup>1</sup> Ludlow's Memoirs.

Chap.

IV.

endeavoring to introduce popery, the common enemy of both, could have reconciled minds so much exasperated by mutual injuries. The nation being at length alarmed by the rapid strides James was making for overturning the James II. protestant religion, and establishing an arbitrary government, in the room of a limited monarchy, invited over the prince of Orange, who in right of his wife was considered as heir to the crown, notwithstanding James had a son lately born who was styled prince of Wales. William landed at Torbay on the 4th of November 1688, and immediately marched to Exeter, from whence, after stopping a few days to refresh his men, and to give time for the country to join him, he proceeded on his march to London.

Alarmed by the march of the prince with his army, as well as by the defection of the principal nobility, James issued writs to call a new parliament, to meet on the 25th of January 168%, and deputed the marquis of Halifax, the earl of Nottingham, and the lord Godolphin, to propose a treaty with William. They arrived on the 3d of December at Reading, where they met a trumpeter with the prince's passport, who at the same time demanded a passport for one of his gentlemen, whom he wished to send to the princess of Denmark.<sup>1</sup>

In the mean while the royal army was encamped on Hounslow-heath, and a party of eight hundred Irish soldiers, horse and foot, were quartered in this town. As the prince's army advanced, a report was circulated in the town, that the men had received orders to massacre the inhabitants, and plunder the town, upon the following Sunday, during divine service.

The alarm occasioned by this report induced many of the inhabitants to leave the town; and as the number of the fugitives increased daily, the commander in chief placed sentinels at all the avenues, with orders not to suffer any person to leave the place without his permission. This order, which was considered as a confirmation of the report, increased the general panic which had spread through every rank of the inhabitants, who waited with the utmost impatience for the arrival of the first division of the prince's army, which was marching to their assistance. As soon, therefore, as information was received of their arrival at Newbury, the magistrates found means, notwithstanding the watch that was kept, to send an express the same evening to the commanding officer, requesting immediate assistance. In consequence of this request, the officer dispatched a corps of about three hundred men, the same night, with orders to expedite their march towards Reading as much as possible, so great was the apprehension of the threatened destruction of the town,

<sup>\*\*</sup> History of William III. page 148.

and the massacre of the inhabitants, which it was supposed would take place on the following morning, the 10th of December. However, if any such intention had manifested itself on the part of the Irish, which is very problematical, it was happily prevented by the critical arrival of the party sent from Newbury the over night.

CHAP.

1688

The Irish, who were apprized of their coming, had taken every precaution to prevent their penetrating into the heart of the town. For this purpose, a party of horse was drawn up in the golden bear yard, the corner of Castlestreet, and the walls, which at that time enclosed saint Mary's church-yard, on the west and south sides, were lined with musketeers. A strong corps was likewise stationed in Broad-street, and the main body was drawn up in the Market-place, and a sentinel was placed on saint Mary's tower to give notice by signal, as soon as the enemy appeared in sight. From this disposition of the forces, it is evident, they expected the Dutch troops would have attempted to enter the town by Castle-street, that being the direct road from Newbury; but in this they were disappointed, for the latter, having got information of the disposition of the enemy from the inhabitants, filed off to the left before they came in sight of the town, and marching along Pangbournlane, under cover of the hedges, they entered the town unperceived by the sentinel, who in consequence had not time to give the alarm, before the Irish found themselves vigorously attacked in different points.

On entering the Butts, the main body of the prince's troops fell with such impetuosity upon the Irish, drawn up at the bottom of Castle-street, that they immediately gave way, and were pursued by the enemy towards the Market-place, where they arrived just as those, to whom the defence of Broadstreet had been entrusted, were entering; having been driven back by another party of the prince's troops. These two parties, meeting in the narrow streets which united at the top of Sun-lane, were so pressed together, that they were unable to keep their ranks, so that rushing into the Market-place in a tumultuous manner, the main body stationed there were struck with such a panic, that without waiting to learn the number or strength of the enemy, they fled with the utmost expedition towards Twyford.

As soon as order could be restored in the town, a party of horse was sent in pursuit of the fugitives, but they were not able to come up with them 'till they were seen passing Cullum-bridge, at the entrance of Twyford, where, being joined by some of the king's troops, and night coming on, it was thought advisable by their pursuers to return to Reading.\*

<sup>\*</sup> At a place called Horsepit-hill, just beyond Twyford, as some laborers were digging gravel,

CHAP.

During the surprise, sir John Lanier, who commanded the Irish troops, narrowly escaped being taken by some Dutch troopers, who fired at his horses, as he was galloping off in a calash and four, leaving his men to extricate themselves in the best manner they could.

1688 William and Mary.

In this engagement, if such it may be called, very few lives were lost on either side, and those were principally of the king's troops, the Dutch having only one officer killed, and some few privates wounded.

It is probable that this success of the Dutch, over a body of regular forces, superior in number, if not in discipline, to themselves, may in some measure be attributed to the assistance they obtained from the town's people,\* who, exasperated by the menaces of assassination, which they had received from the Irish soldiery, previous to the arrival of their deliverers, willingly embraced the opportunity offered them of revenging their own cause, while fighting for that of their country. However this may be, it was certainly a day of deliverance for the inhabitants, and as such was annually celebrated by the ringing of the bells in all the churches, on the 21st of December, new style, until the completion of a century; since which time, that custom has been omitted, and the day of Reading-fight, as it was called, is gradually wearing out of memory.

they discovered several skeletons lying in a row, with their heads and feet placed alternately. There was likewise found a metal box, inclosing a smaller one, probably a cartridge box, with some other things, but these being carried away by one of the workmen, and lost, its proper use cannot now be ascertained. These were, probably, some of the victims who fell on this occasion.

\* On the approach of a small party of the prince's cavalry, the Irish fired, and quitted their post, and were followed by the Scotch in disorder; there were not many of the Irish killed, and as few taken; however, the court complained that the town's-people shot at them out of their windows, while they were attacked by the prince's horse.—History of William, vol. III. page 152.

## History of Reading.

## CHAPTER V.

1700

Anne

WE are now arrived at that period of our history, when we shall no longer CHAP. V. be obliged to trace the melancholy consequences of civil dissentions, arising from political oppression. The revolution of 1688, has defined and established the rights of the monarch, and the liberties of the subject, on such clear and firm ground, as will, we trust, for ever prevent the return of those jealousies and animosities, which for nearly six centuries had agitated this country. benefits arising from this happy event, have been experienced by every part of the empire; and the inhabitants of Reading in particular, are indebted to it for a longer series of tranquility than perhaps they ever before experienced, as well as for all the advantages derived from it, in improving their manufactures, and extending their trade beyond what might be expected from an inland town. But these improvements were slow in their progress. oppressions of former governments had prevented the inhabitants from accumulating capitals, without which it is impossible to carry on trade to any extent; or, if amidst the general penury, a few capitalists were found, their ignorance in mercantile affairs, rendered them cautious of extending their dealings beyond the limits of their own town. These reasons may account for the slow change that was observable, either in the increase of the trade, or the improvement of the town, during the reigns of William and Mary and of queen Anne, to which may be added the continual foreign wars the nation was engaged in for almost the whole of that period. For though the supplies for carrying on these wars were raised on the funding system, whereby the former weight of taxes on such occasions was greatly diminished, yet it still tended to damp the exertions of individuals, already too prone to a state of inactivity.

The manufacturing of sail-cloth began about this time to be encouraged in Reading, in the room of the woollen manufacture, which had been gradually declining since the civil war, for the encouragement of which the flax dressers, spinners, whitsters, weavers, venders and others, concerned in the working and making of British made sail-cloth, presented a petition to the

CHAP. V. house for the furtherance of their trade; but it does not appear that any bill

Another great impediment to the improvement of the borough, was the 1713 miserable state of the high roads leading to it. These had been suffered to be worn down by carriages, during a long series of years, without the least attempt being made towards their improvement, 'till they had become almost impassable; so much so, that, nearly within the limits of the borough, a single carriage could seldom proceed on its journey, 'till others came up to its assistance. To remedy this evil, as turnpike roads began about this period to be formed in the neighbourhood of the metropolis, the gentlemen of Reading, in 1714, petitioned the house of commons, by their members, for leave to bring in a bill to enable them to repair the high-way from the bear-inn, in this borough, to Puntfield, in the county of Berks, which being agreed to, a bill

for that purpose received the royal assent, the same year. 1714

On the accession of George I. the partisans of the abdicated family en-George I. deavored to raise disturbances in various parts of the kingdom, particularly at the elections for the representatives in parliament, which took place on that occasion. In Reading the contest was the warmest ever known: the majority of the middling class of the inhabitants supported the whig interest, while those of the lower orders, from being less informed, and consequently more easily deceived, embraced that of the tories. It had been the practice to admit to the privilege of voting for members to serve in parliament for this borough, all who could prove that they had been accustomed to boil a pot within its limits; and, on this occasion, the town had all the appearance of a large camp of gypsies; fires being lighted in every street and alley, for even lodgers were entitled to this privilege. These, under the appellation of pot wabblers, from the superiority of their numbers, and the riotousness of their dispositions, could at all times ensure success to those candidates, whose interests a blind partiality, or the spirit of party, might induce them to adopt. At this election. they were almost unanimous in favor of Robert Clarges and Felix Calvert, esqrs. who were elected, in opposition to William Cadogan, esq. who was known to be a friend to the reigning prince. But, on a petition of certain of the inhabitants of the borough, paying scot and lot, against the return, a committee was appointed to take the same into consideration, who, after the examination of witnesses, declared the election to be null and void, and that the right of election was solely in the inhabitants paying scot and lot,2 by whom it has ever since been exercised.

1716

A bill having been brought into parliament, this year, for making the CHAP. V. river Kennet navigable from Reading to Newbury, the inhabitants of the former were greatly alarmed lest the trade of the town, now become considerable, should be proportionably diminished, if not entirely ruined, by being diverted through another channel; in consequence of this persuasion, every measure was taken that could be devised, to obstruct its progress through the house, and to prevent, if possible, its passing into a law. For this purpose, a petition of the mayor, aldermen, and burgesses, and other inhabitants of the borough, was presented to the house, on the 26th of April, praying to be heard by counsel against the bill, which was granted. On the 20th of May following, a petition was presented to the house, on behalf of H. Boult, esq. Thomas Constable, merchant, and John Sylvester, gent. proprietors of the water works for supplying the inhabitants with water, praying to be heard by counsel against the said bill; and on the day following, another petition was presented from George Blagrave, esq. proprietor of several mills called saint Giles, and Minster mills, both within the borough, and standing on the river Kennet, and also one other mill called Calcot mill, in the parish of Tilehurst, praying likewise to be heard by counsel; petitions were also presented to the house from the owners of wharfs and others. But all these petitions were of no avail, the bill having passed the house of commons the 13th of August, and soon after received the royal assent.

Though this measure at the time was considered very injurious to the interest of the town, yet Reading does not appear to have suffered from it, except in a small diminution in the carrying trade, and in the hire of a few warehouses, which have since been converted to different purposes; but in other respects, we believe, the extension of the navigation has been rather beneficial than injurious to the general interest of the place; and as the communication is now opened with Bristol and the north west parts of the kingdom, by means of the Kennet and Avon canal, the additional influx of trade by this conveyance, which has already began to be experienced, will, we have no doubt, more than compensate the triffing loss the town may have sustained since its first opening.

In the ensuing year, a bill passed the legislature, for improving the high road from Maidenhead-bridge to Reading, and from the Folly, near Maidenhead, to Henley. This bill was divided into three separate districts, the management whereof is placed in different commissioners, who have the sole conduct of every thing that regards their separate districts. Being thus inde-

CHAP. V. pendent of each other, except on the occasion of renewing the bill, many of the Reading commissioners thought it advisable, on that occurrence taking place in 1806, for each of the district commissioners to go to parliament for a separate bill, particularly as though the new clauses to be inserted were such as concerned each district solely, yet they were liable to be lost in the house, from the opposition that might arise in either of the other districts. For this, and other reasons, a meeting of all the commissioners was requested at Twyford, where the subject was deliberately canvassed, and being put to the vote, was carried in the negative by one voice only; since which, as was

districts, who had opposed the measure, expressed their conviction, that, on a future occasion, it would be better to apply to parliament for separate bills.

The powers granted the commissioners for improving the navigation of

the river Kennet, being found inadequate for the purpose, a new bill passed in 1720, whereby they were considerably enlarged, and the term extended to a

foreseen, so many difficulties arose in passing the bill, that the other two

longer period, without meeting with any opposition from this borough.

On the 2d of May, 1721, a petition of the mayor, recorder, aldermen, burgesses, and inhabitants, was presented to the house and read, complaining of the miseries the nation labored under, by the great decay of trade, manufactures, and public credit, occasioned by the mismanagement of the late directors of the South-sea company, their aiders, abetters, and confederates, and prayed that the house would take such further measures as should be judged proper for the encouragement of trade, redressing of grievances, restoring of public credit, and doing justice to an injured nation.<sup>1</sup>

And on the 18th of October 1722, a petition was presented to the house of commons from Charles Cadogan, and Richard Thompson, esqrs. complaining of an undue election and return for this borough, which being referred to a committee of privileges and elections, the sitting members were declared duly elected.

As the prosperity of the town increased, the inhabitants began to turn their attention to its improvement, which appears for a long series of years to have been entirely neglected: the first attempt of this nature occurs about the middle of this century, when Mr. John Richards, an eminent draper, and alderman of the borough, purchased a row of houses which had long divided the present King's-street into two lanes, called Sun-lane and Back-lane, which he pulled down, and converted the site into the present street, for the benefit of the public. Had this improvement been extended, by taking down the row of houses which separate Butcher-row and Fisher-row, the communi-

1720

1722

George II. cation between the western parts of the town and the Market-place would CHAP. V. have been rendered much more commodious than it now is.

On the 28th of September 1754, a fire broke out in Sievier-street, whereby six hop-kilns, two barns, and several store-houses were destroyed.

1754

On the first of November in the following year, being the same day on which the city of Lisbon was destroyed by an earthquake, a remarkable agitation was perceived here in the waters of the Kennet: Whether this phenomenon was at all connected with that melancholy event, would be difficult to ascertain, but from the coincidence of time, and from the like agitation having been perceived in Plymouth on the same day, such a connexion seems by no means improbable.<sup>1</sup>

1755

The peace concluded with France, by the treaty of Utrecht, began about this time to be disturbed, after a period of more than 30 years uninterrupted tranquility. The enemy, as usual, held out threats of invasion, which they knew would distract our councils and alarm the inhabitants, even though these threats should never be put in execution. On this occasion, addresses, expressive of the loyalty and attachment of the people, were presented to the throne from various parts of the kingdom. That from this borough, in the name of the corporate body, was as follows:

" Most gracious Sovereign,

"We, your majesty's most dutiful and loyal subjects, the mayor, aldermen, and burgesses of your majesty's ancient borough of Reading, being warmed with a just indignation, at the daring menaces, and hostile violences of France, beg leave to assure your majesty, that in the present, and all future occasions, we are, and ever shall be, ready to exert ourselves to the utmost of our power, in the defence of your sacred majesty's person, crown, and dignity.

"We think ourselves bound in duty, to return your majesty our unfeigned thanks, for the vigorous and seasonable measures your majesty has taken to vindicate the honor of the crown, and the rights of your subjects, not doubting but that your majesty will obtain that satisfaction by the sword, which could not be procured by pacific and more agreeable measures.

"From the justice of our cause, we place a strong confidence in the blessing of the Almighty, upon your majesty's councils and arms, and pray that your unwearied endeavors for the public good may be crowned with success; and that your majesty may long live to enjoy the fruits of it, which we hope will be continued in your royal and illustrious progeny to the latest ages."

"Given under our common seal the 25th of May, 1756."
On the conclusion of the peace in 1763, the corporate body again ad-

\* Philosophical Transactions.

CHAP. V. dressed the throne. This address was not presented by the members, which is usual on such occasions, but transmitted to the earl of Halifax, one of his majesty's principal secretaries of state, by whom it was presented to his majesty, and is as follows:

George 411.

" Most gracious Sovereign,

"We, your majesty's most faithful and loyal subjects, the mayor, aldermen, and burgesses of Reading, beg leave most humbly to congratulate your majesty on the termination of a just, though bloody, and expensive war; and on the happy establishment of peace, and the public tranquility. For this so desirable and inestimable event, we entreat your majesty graciously to accept our most dutiful and sincere acknowledgments; and as the prosperity and happiness of your people is the sole object of your royal endeavors, we beg leave to assure your majesty, that we most ardently beseech the Almighty, that your majesty may live and reign in the hearts and affections of all your subjects, united, and ever zealous of your majesty's honor and dignity, and studious, gratefully to cultivate and improve the invaluable fruits and blessings of peace.—Given under our common seal, the 11th of June, 1763."

It is remarkable that both the foregoing addresses are in the name of the corporate body alone, and given under their common seal. I have not been able to trace, when this practice began, but it is probably coeval with the first institution of that body, when the mass of the people was rather considered as property, than fellow citizens, who had a right to participate in whatever tended to the advancement of the good of the nation. Since this period, however, a different system has been adopted in the borough; all the subsequent petitions and addresses having run in the name of the inhabitants as well as the corporate body.

In the autumn of the year 1766, almost every part of the kingdom was disturbed by riots and disorders, occasioned, as was pretended, by the high price of provisions: These generally took place on market days, and seem to have spread over every part of the county, except this town, where they were happily prevented by the seasonable arrival of a troop of lord Albermarle's dragoons, and captain Cave's company of infantry.

Anonymous letters were sent to the magistrates, and principal farmers, threatening, with the most horrid imprecations, to burn them and their houses, if the prices of grain, and other provisions, were not reduced; and so great was the apprehension of the farmers, that they advertised, in the public prints, their willingness to dispose of their best wheat to the poor, at five shillings the bushel of nine gallons, and the millers agreed to grind it for them gratis. By these salutary measures, together with the spirited exertions of the magistrates, and the assistance of the military, the spirit of insubordination

1766

was subdued before the close of the year. Sixteen of the principal rioters CHAP. V. were committed to our county jail, and Mr. Baron Perrot, and Mr. Justice Aston, were sent, with a special commission, to this town, to hold an extraordinary assize, which commenced the second of December, and continued the two following days, when sentence of death was passed on three of the rioters, but, through the lenity of the government, only Daniel Eclands, who, in addition to the crime of committing the riot, had extorted money from one James Stone, of Steventon, suffered the penalty of the law; but so great was the commiseration of the town's-people for the unhappy sufferer, that none of the tradesmen would furnish the instrument of death, nor could the meanest individual be prevailed with to perform the office of executioner, so that the keeper of the prison, it is said, was obliged to officiate himself, with an old cord procured for the purpose.

It is remarkable, that notwithstanding the plea for these excesses, was the exorbitant price of provisions, yet the best wheat sold at the time from 16 to 171, per load: the quartern loaf at 6d, beef  $4\frac{1}{2}d$ , per lb, veal 5d, mutton  $3\frac{1}{2}d$ . lamb 5d. and pork 5d. So little cause had the people to disturb the peace of the country, and threaten the lives of individuals, for no other crime than that of not parting with their property for less money than they could actually afford.

In the year 1770, a design was set on foot for making a navigable canal from Sonning to Monkey Island, near Bray, in this county, and from thence to Isleworth, in the county of Middlesex, whereby the trade would have been greatly facilitated, and the freight of heavy goods, which are mostly conveyed by water, very much reduced.

Mr. Brindley, being desired by the Thames' commissioners to make a survey of the proposed line, and to give in an estimate of the expence, presented the plan and report to the commissioners, at Reading, on the 26th of February, who gave it their unqualified approbation. However, at a meeting held at Oxford, in the following March, another plan was laid before them for the improvement of the old river, by means of pound locks through its whole extent; this was likewise agreed to.

These different proposals were supported, as is common on such occasions, by calculations, from which, for want of actual proofs, either party were at liberty to draw whatever conclusions might best suit their purpose. The expence of navigating a barge of 130 tons from Reading to London, and back again, was proved, by experience, to be on an average about 881. To lower this expence was the object of both parties. The advocates for a canal, by their calculations, made the supposed expences, that would accrue in navigat-

CHAP. V. ing the same vessel through the proposed canal, without taking into consideration the saving in time, to be no more than 54l. 10s. 3d. It was, therefore, necessary for the advocates for the improvement of the old river to prove, that the savings by their plan would be still greater; accordingly they made it evidently appear, on paper, that by their proposed plan the expence would be reduced to 50l. 11s. 4d. But so erroneously do we reckon when we wish to promote a favorite object, that notwithstanding the pains the gentlemen took in forming their calculations, the expence of navigating the same distance on the river, since the pound locks have been erected, is more than double what they so clearly proved it would only be.

The Thames' commissioners being thus divided into two parties, and acting from different motives and interests, endeavored to throw every obstacle in the way of each other's plan. At the meeting held at Reading on the 5th of June, the commissioners agreed to petition parliament, for leave to bring in a bill to enable them to carry their intended plan into execution, and proposed to borrow the sum of seventy thousand pounds, on bonds, bearing 5 per cent. interest, to meet the expence. As soon as these resolutions were made public, another set of commissioners met at Henley, and resolved to petition parliament for powers to borrow money for the purposes of erecting pound-locks, wiers, &c. as proposed by the other plan. These two opinions were so opposite that it was easily seen, that some secret influence was made use of. It is impossible but every man, who had given the subject the least consideration, must have been convinced of the superior advantages arising from a short navigation over a long one, even supposing the expences to be equal on both, because expedition is the life and soul of trade, and the want of it is at this day severely felt by the commercial inhabitants of this town. Public benefit is generally the ostensible motive for national improvements; and public benefit is as often the plea for obstructing their execution. This was the professed plan of those who proposed to improve the navigation by means of the canals, and so it was of their opponents, though the latter were thought at the time to have been a little biassed by friendship, gentlemen having been brought to the meeting to qualify and vote, at the same time, on the propriety of a measure which their habits of life disqualified them from being acquainted with. "As well (said the advocates for the canal) might the legislature appoint a certain number of barge-masters to set in convocation, or to regulate the interior management of our colleges, as to empower the vice-chancellor, or heads of colleges, to preside at a navigation meeting. Very few countrygentlemen, who are qualified in point of property, pay that attention to the difficult task of improving navigation, so as to qualify them to debate on the

least of those topics, which must at times be laid before them; how then can CHAP. V. men, who are entrusted with the cure of souls, and whose whole attention, no doubt, is taken up with the study of the holy scriptures, know any thing of navigation affairs?" The objection to ecclesiastics' interfering in the management of the Thames, seems to have arisen from the first opposition to the plan having originated at Oxford, where the clergy generally preside, and where another meeting was held, on the 20th of August, when the resolutions entered into at Henley were agreed to, with the addition, that an allowance should be made to the hirelings,\* who, by the proposed mode of towing with horses, would be deprived of their maintenance.

1770

On the 9th of October, another meeting of the commissioners was held at Reading, when, notwithstanding the resolutions entered into at the two last meetings, they determined to persevere in the prosecution of the original plan, and because an objection had been started, that the old river, by being neglected would become unnavigable in the lower districts, they agreed to keep it in its present state from Sonning to Boulter's-lock, out of the tonnage to be paid on the canals; and moreover, that the mayor and body corporate of Reading, with the town and county members, and such other gentlemen as should hereafter be appointed, should be a body corporate, to raise the money to be advanced by life annuities, and when all the expences of cutting the canals were discharged, and a fund prepared for the perpetual repair thereof, then the tolls to cease, and the canals made a free navigation for ever.

At length, towards the close of the year, the bill was brought into parliament, where it was lost, on the third reading, by a majority, procured, as it was asserted, by one of the members for the county, whose premises lay in the line of the proposed canals. Had this plan been carried into execution, every inhabitant of Reading would have been benefitted by a considerable decrease in the price of the carriage of goods, and the barge-owners been enabled to make their voyages to and from London in half the time they now do.

Henry Vansittart, esq. chosen one of the members for this borough in 1768, having been appointed to an honorable post in the East India company's service, sailed for India in the Aurora, soon after his election, but as the ship had not been heard of after her leaving the Cape, no doubt was entertained of her having been lost: The corporation thereupon requested Mr. Dodd, the other member, to move in the house of commons for a new writ to be issued for the election of another member to serve the remainder of the time. Accordingly, on the 2d of March 1772, that gentleman moved for a new writ, on the ground

<sup>\*</sup> These were a set of men who got their living by towing the barges against the stream,

CHAP. V. of the great probability of the loss of the Aurora, and that every soul on board had perished, as she had not been heard of for more than two years, and that the town might no longer be deprived of the services of one of its members.

1772

To this it was answered, "that mere probability was not a sufficient motive for the house to proceed upon, in a case wherein a new writ was required to be granted, and a member to be chosen in consequence of it. That if Mr. Vansittart should be alive and return, the house would be plunged into a difficulty it would not easily get rid of. In the case of general Stanwix, introduced in the debate, who was supposed to have been lost in his passage to Ireland, as the ship in which he embarked had never been heard of, there could be no doubt of the fact, the Irish seas being too near, and too well known, for any person to remain in them undiscovered; but it was not so in distant seas, from whence persons might return a long time after they had been supposed to have been lost, as in the case of captain Cheap, who went to the South-seas with commodore Anson, and was not heard of for four years, and yet returned." For these reasons the writ was refused by the house; but the inhabitants of the town considered the argument as a manœuvre to get rid of the motion as handsomely as possible, because it was no longer likely to answer the expectations of the original proposers. John Walter, esq. of Farley-hill, Mr. Dodd's friend and near neighbor, was designed to fill the vacant seat, and accordingly had the preceeding week offered himself a candidate, with the usual professions of independence, and a promise of a strict attention to the interest of the borough: but these professions were not so cordially received by the electors as was expected, they being jealous that it was the intent of the ministerial party to surprise them into the choice of a gentleman, who would be thereby bound to give them his support. As it was not doubted but that the election, if the writ were granted, would be hurried on, the opposition made choice of Francis Annesley, esq. a gentleman that had long resided in the town, and was well known and respected by the majority of the people, as a proper person to support the independence of the borough. At a meeting of the inhabitants, at the town-hall, on the 29th of February, on the two gentlemen being put in nomination, the shew of hands was so decidedly in favor of Mr. Annesley, that Mr. Walter, " not willing to disturb the peace and unanimity of the borough," declined giving them any further trouble; whereupon the anxiety expressed for filling up the vacancy in the representation of the borough subsided, and the business got rid of, as we have said, by the house putting a negative on Mr. Dodd's motion.\*

The great weight of taxes which were imposed on the nation in support

<sup>\*</sup> Mr. Coates erroneously states, that Mr. Annesley was returned at this time.

of the American war, which from the beginning had been always unpopular, CHAP. V. so much increased the public discontent, that petitions were presented to the house of commons, during its continuance, from almost every part of the kingdom, for the redress of public grievances, but in none was the necessity of reform more fully expressed, than in the following one from this borough:

1780

" The humble petition of the inhabitants of the borough of Reading, to the house of commons:

"We, the mayor, aldermen, burgesses, and inhabitants of the borough of Reading, considering the vast sums of money expended in this most unfortunate war, sensibly affected themselves, by the heavy taxes already laid on the subjects of this kingdom, and alarmed at the idea, that others may shortly be imposed; humbly request your honorable house to turn their most serious consideration to the diminished resources, and growing burthens of the country.

"Your petitioners conceive, that, in this time of general distress, it will be necessary to alleviate the public burthens, by abolishing sinecure and useless places, curtailing the exorbitant salaries and perquisites annexed to others, and rescinding many unmerited pensions, the disposal of which not only occasions a great waste of the public treasures, but gives unconstitutional power to the ministers of the crown, subverts the independence of parliament, and operates with an undue influence on all that is dear to our country.

"Your petitioners humbly conceive, that the interposition of your honorable house, in these points, and its diligent attention to the just and economical expenditure of the public revenue, by persons entrusted with it, may be productive of great national good, and enable this country, by properly directing and combining its resources, to prevail over its most powerful enemies.

"They therefore presume to address their petition to your honorable house, assuring it, that it does not in any wise originate from a spirit of party, but is dictated by the clearest conviction, that the present situation of affairs, requires the attention of every man, and of his honest and speedy exertion of all possible means to promote or defend the public-weal."

This petition was carried by a great-majority of the inhabitants, at a meeting held at the town-hall, on the 3d of February, when Henry Deane, esq. being called to the chair, it was proposed by Mr. James Simonds, and seconded by the reverend doctor Nicholls, and ordered to be presented to the house by the members.

After the death of the marquis of Rockingham, then at the head of the administration, under which the peace of Europe had been restored, and the independence of North America confirmed, Mr. Fox, disgusted at not being permitted to take the lead in government, threw up his place, and formed a

CHAP. V. coalition with the late premier, with whom he had been in the habits of constant opposition during the continuance of the war. This coalition was so odious to the people, that his majesty soon after found it necessary to remove the new ministry, who, by this means, had obtained an unconstitutional authority over the state, and to appoint Mr. Pitt to the head of the new administration. This measure was so acceptable to the nation at large, that addresses were carried to the throne, from most of the counties, and corporate towns, in the kingdom; among which, was the following one from the inhabitants of this borough:

" Most gracious Sovereign,

"We, your majesty's most dutiful and loving subjects, the mayor, aldermen, burgesses, and inhabitants of the borough of Reading, beg leave to approach your majesty, with assurances of our most cordial attachment to your person and government, and our reverence to the constitution, as established at the glorious revolution.

"We cannot reflect upon the peculiar situation of this country at the present moment, without representing the necessity that appears, for the most diligent, and active endeavors of those, whom your majesty has thought proper to entrust with the conduct of public affairs, and we trust that such measures will be pursued, as may tend effectually to establish the glory and happiness of your majesty's reign, and the true interests of your people.

"We beg leave to thank your majesty for having removed your late ministers, and having appointed others whom we are persuaded possess the confidence of your subjects, and we assure your majesty of our resolution to unite in the support of your royal prerogatives, and our happy constitution."

improvement of the town, particularly with respect to the paving of the

About this time, the inhabitants began to turn their attention to the

streets, which had been suffered to fall into a ruinous state, from the negligent manner in which they were generally repaired, each inhabitant being obliged, from custom, to keep that part, in front of his premises, in repair, as far as the kennel which ran through the middle of each street, and as it frequently happened that no two, though near neighbours, could agree to perform the necessary work in concert, the streets were frequently obstructed by workmen, and for want of a true level being observed, the stagnated waters in the hollows not only became dangerous, from their putrescency, but frequently intercepted the communication from one side of the street to the other. In the narrow

streets, no part of the pitching, rough as it was, was appropriated to the footpassenger; and in the wider ones, though the pitching was less rough in the foot-ways, yet these were so incommoded with posts and rails, and trees, that

it was equally difficult and dangerous for the passengers passing them in the CHAP. V. night. To remedy these inconveniences, it was this year proposed to procure an act of parliament, for the better paving, lighting, and watching the town. This scheme, notwithstanding the great advantages that would evidently bederived from it, met with such opposition, that the bill would have been lost in the house, had it not been for the persevering efforts of John Deane, esq. at that time mayor of the borough, to whom the town is principally indebted for its present improved state.

1785

By this act, the commissioners are authorised to assess the occupiers of allthe houses within the borough, the rents whereof are five pounds per annum, and under twenty, the sum of six-pence in the pound; for all houses above twenty pounds per annum, and under forty, the sum of nine-pence in the pound; and for all houses of forty pounds per annum and upwards, one shilling in the pound, whatever may be the rent of their houses.

As soon as the act had received his majesty's assent, the commissioners began to take the necessary steps for putting it in execution. To have waited for the slow progress of collecting the rates, before the work was commenced, would, in a great measure, have defeated the ends of the bill: it was therefore agreed to raise the money for carrying it on, by life annuities, and accordingly eight hundred pounds were borrowed, on two lives, at the rate of ten per cent. but this being insufficient, a further sum of one thousand pounds was borrowed, by a free loan,\* without interest. By the aid of these sums, the commissioners were enabled to complete the work in a short time; and, as a compliment to the gentleman, by whose exertions the act had been procured, the first stone was laid before the door of his house, with the following inscription:

> Nimis aspera, sano levabit cultu Oppidi cultus officium magistratus.

The next improvement was made by the corporation, by rebuilding the town-hall on the ancient site, from a design of Mr. Poulton, one of their members. The former edifice was disfigured by a row of massive pillars, supporting heavy pointed arches, which, extending along the centre, through the whole length of the hall, divided it into two parts, thereby rendering it very unfit for the purposes for which it was intended, and had, therefore, been frequently complained of by the judges who occasionally held the assizes in it.

In the following year, the corporation took down the old wooden bridge, which had been erected across the Kennet, in Duke-street, and built the 1786

1787.

<sup>\*</sup>This loan has been since repaid by instalments, but the annuitants are still living.

CHAP. V. present elegant stone one on the same spot, at a considerable expence. Great as these burthens were, they were enabled to execute them without incurring any additional debts, by a scrupulous attention to economy, and curtailing the expences of their annual festivals.

1789

Towards the close of the year 1788, his majesty was afflicted with a disorder that incapacitated him from performing the executive duties of the crown. On this occasion, Mr. Pitt brought a bill into the house of commons, for appointing a regency, under certain restrictions. This was opposed by Mr. Fox, on the ground that the regency was, by the constitution, vested in the prince of Wales. This bill was debated with considerable warmth on both sides, but at length passed the house. It being thought necessary to support the minister, on this occasion, a meeting of the inhabitants took place at the town-hall, on the 19th of January, when it was unanimously resolved—

"That the thanks of the mayor, aldermen, burgesses, and inhabitants, be presented to the right honorable William Pitt, and also to Francis Annesley, and R. A. Neville, esquires, members of this borough, and the other members of parliament, who, supporting the plain principles of the glorious revolution, by their votes in parliament, upon the 16th day of December last, nobly asserted the people's rights, by the lords and commons of the realm, to provide the means of supplying the deficiency of the executive power, during his majesty's very melancholy indisposition.

"Who, by the firmness of their conduct upon that occasion, have carried into effect the first principles of civil society, and have probably prevented calamities, which might have arisen from the establishment of opposite doctrines, subversive of the lawful rights of the crown, and of the liberties of the people."

The above resolutions having been transmitted to Mr. Pitt, at the request of the meeting, by R. Maul, esq. mayor, he was pleased to return the following answer:

"SIR,—Having had the honor of receiving through you, the resolutions of the mayor, aldermen, burgesses, and inhabitants of Reading, I hope you will allow me to request of you, to take the first opportunity of conveying my sincere acknowledgments for the very flattering testimony of their approbation. It gives me particular pleasure to find, that the sentiments of so respectable a body, coincide with the principles, on which I felt it my duty to act, on an occasion so important and critical as the present.

I am, &c. W. PITT."

His majesty's happy recovery being announced in the month of March following, another meeting of the inhabitants was held at the town-hall, at

which a loyal and congratulatory address to his majesty on the occasion was Char. V moved for by Mr. alderman Blandy, and seconded by Mr. H. Finch; as was one to her majesty, by Mr. John Deane, and seconded by Mr. Jonathan Tanner, both which were graciously received.

The question on the abolition of the slave trade, was at this time agitated with much earnestness among every description of people. The French revolutionists, (who, under the mask of virtue and humanity, were practising every species of vice and cruelty,) had emancipated the negroes in their West India islands, and Mr. Wilberforce had introduced a bill into the house of commons to the same effect, for those under the authority of this country. This was a sufficient stimulous for well-meaning people to exert all their energies, to put an end to a practice, which so evidently militates against all our ideas of humanity, and the natural rights of mankind. Had they confined the measure to a gradual annihilation of the trade, no man of feeling, no man that had a just idea of the "human form divine," would have hesitated in giving the measure his cordial support; but when they went to a sudden and universal emancipation, it was time for the prudence of the house to interpose, and, by a wise procrastination, to ward off from our islands those dreadful calamities, which the white inhabitants had experienced in the island of St. Domingo, from the precipitate adoption of the same measure.

When the passions of men are roused, the still voice of reason is seldom heard, or attended to; it is not therefore to be wondered at, if petitions in favor of the immediate abolition of the trade flowed into the house of commons from all parts, or that the inhabitants of Reading, who are always among the first in supporting popular measures, should have assembled in an early stage of the business, to express their abhorrence of that trade. On this occasion, Mr. Jonathan Tanner being called to the chair, the following petition to the house of commons was read, and agreed to unanimously:

"The humble petition of the inhabitants\* of the borough of Reading.

"We, your humble petitioners, having maturely considered the African slave trade, presume to lay before you our most serious conviction, that it is a system of commerce repugnant to every principle of sound policy, justice, and humanity; and the most iniquitous that ever disgraced a civilized nation.

"In the full possession of civil and religious liberty, we feel it our duty, to exert our utmost endeavors, in extending these blessings to the rest of mankind.

<sup>\*</sup> This is the first instance, we believe, on record, wherein the petition did not run in the name of the corporate body as well as the inhabitants.

CHAP. V.

"We, therefore, humbly pray your honorable house, to pass an act for abolishing a traffic, the continuance of which must ever prove disgraceful to the character of a free people."

1792

The revolutionary principles, which had been disseminated in France, began, about this time, to make a great progress in this country: seditious meetings were held in different parts of the metropolis, wherein inflammatory speeches were made by the popular leaders, subversive of all order and government. Whereupon his majesty issued a proclamation for the suppressing of all such unlawful meetings, which met with the warmest approbation from the loyal part of the nation, particularly from the friends of government in this town, who having requested that a meeting of the inhabitants might be called at the town-hall, the same took place on the 22d of June, when the following address was proposed by doctor Taylor, and seconded by Mr. alderman Blandy, and being unanimously agreed to, was, on the Wednesday following, presented to his majesty, by the members for the borough:

" May it please your Majesty,

"We, your most dutiful and loyal subjects, the mayor, aldermen, burgesses, and inhabitants of the borough of Reading, beg leave to approach your throne, with the assurance of our unfeigned loyalty, and attachment, to your sacred person, and our zealous regard for the preservation of our most excellent constitution.

"Whilst the greatest part of Europe is distracted with civil dissentions, and laboring under the calamities of war, we behold with pleasure, and heartfelt gratitude, this kingdom enjoying the blessings of peace, improving her manufactures, extending her commerce, and, by her increasing revenues, enabled to diminish the burthens of the public taxes.

"These superior advantages, we gratefully ascribe, under the divine providence, to your majesty's auspicious government, and to the wisdom, and happy influence of the British constitution.

"We cannot then, without horror, observe the late insidious attempts of certain factious and evil-minded persons to infuse a spirit of discontent into the nation, and, under the specious name of reform, to subvert the foundations of a government so wisely constructed, and which so effectually maintains, at the same time, the dignity and authority of the sovereign, and the liberty and happiness of the subject.

"We do therefore most humbly thank your majesty for your late gracious proclamation, tending to counteract such evil designs, and to prevent the unwary from being ensuared by false and specious pretences; and we hope,

by a cheerful and ready obedience to our king, and the laws of our country, CHAP. V. to prove ourselves not unworthy of the blessings we enjoy.

"May your majesty continue to reign in the hearts of a loyal and affectionate people, and may the British constitution ever remain pure and uncorrupted, the envy and admiration of succeeding ages."

1792

His majesty's proclamation for the suppression of seditious meetings, was no doubt a wise and constitutional measure, but unfortunately it was not sufficiently discriminative in pointing out those meetings to which it was principally intended to apply; and, in consequence, the inoffensive, as well as the guilty; the harmless meetings of a few members of an evening club, as well as the traitorous ones at Chalk-farm, were in like manner subject to the same control. Among the former, was a club which met at the Feathers, under the name of a debating society. This society had been some years established under the patronage of the late lord Barrymore, who took much delight in attending their meetings, and, we believe, sometimes took a part in the debate of the evening. The subjects to be debated upon, were always announced previous to the meeting, so that it would have been easy for the magistrates to have interfered, whenever any improper subject was to be debated. Besides, as the meetings were public, it was impossible that subjects of a treasonable nature could have been entered into, and the more so, as the speakers were all personally known to the magistrates, and amenable to the laws of the country for any unconstitutional tenets they might introduce into their speeches. But these considerations were not sufficient to ward off the blow from this formidable club, whose members, whatever might be their demerits as orators, were as free from plotting against the government, as the most loyal of their fellow subjects.

The country still continuing to be disturbed by political disagreements, it was thought advisable, by the supporters of government, to enter into associations for the defence of the constitution; and, at a meeting at the town-hall, on the 5th of December this year, the following resolutions were proposed by Henry Deane, esq. seconded by Martin Annesley, esq. and approved by the meeting:

"We, whose names are hereunto subscribed, being decidedly of opinion, that a declaration of our loyalty to our sovereign, and our attachment to the constitution of our country, is rendered necessary, by numerous attempts which are made to destroy the foundation of our happiness, and that of all classes of our fellow subjects; do unanimously agree to the following resolutions:

First. That the unexampled blessings which this nation now enjoys, are to be chiefly ascribed, under the favor of providence, to the excellent consti-

CHAP. V. tution of our country, from which our liberties and properties derive protection and security.

Secondly. That we will maintain and defend the form of government, consisting of king, lords, and commons, so happily established in these kingdoms.

1792

Thirdly. That we will, to the utmost of our power, counteract the attempts, so industriously and wickedly made, by seditious meetings and publications, or by any other means whatsoever, to disturb the public peace. That we will promote a strict and uniform obedience to the laws, and that we will afford, by our individual exertions, that assistance to the authority of the lawful magistrate, and to the maintenance of the established government, which is at all times due from the subjects of this realm, but which we feel to be peculiarly necessary under the circumstances of the present times."

1795

In the month of July, this year, the town was alarmed by a serious affray that took place between the town's-men and a detachment of dragoons, on the Irish establishment, quartered here. From their first arrival, they had evinced a riotous disposition; whether this was owing to a want of proper discipline, or to the proveking sarcasm of the lower class of the inhabitants, we are unable to say; but the principle cause of the riot, arose from one of the soldiers drawing his sword upon a person walking down King-street, striking him several times with it, and thrusting at him through the window of a shop in which he had taken refuge. The offender was seized by some of the bystanders, and on complaint being made to the commanding officer, was tried by a court-martial and acquitted. This act of injustice, as it was supposed to be, together with other assaults committed by the soldiers, so enraged the common people, that they anxiously waited for an opportunity of taking their revenge. For this they were not kept long in suspence, as the next day a soldier wantonly shaking one of the poles of a scaffold, on which some carpenters were at work, a battle ensued, when others of the soldiers joining their comrade, the carpenters were severely beaten; the riot now became general, for others of the same trade, resenting the treatment their fellows had received, armed themselves with clubs, and attacked the military, who had by this time increased in numbers. In vain the mayor and other reputable inhabitants expostulated with the combatants; their rage prevented them from hearing the dictates of humanity; and, as the gentlemen's own safety began at length to be endangered, they were for a while obliged to leave them to their fate, when a scene of confusion ensued, that is hardly to be described. knocked down all that came in their way, and their opponents were not wanting in retaliating on them without mercy.

Fortunately for both parties, the volunteers happened at the same time to

be exercising in the Forbury, when the commanding officer being informed of Chap. V. the disturbance, marched them immediately into the market-place, with fixed bayonets, and their muskets loaded with ball cartridges. At first the Irish faced them with intrepidity, but observing the resolution with which they advanced, they thought fit to retire, and afforded the townsmen, as they dispersed, an opportunity of exercising vengeance on such as fell in their way. Such of the soldiers as fled to the volunteers for protection, were escorted to their quarters; and to prevent a renewal of the quarrel, major Deane, the commandant of the volunteers, formed his men into three divisions, who, with their officers, paraded the streets the greater part of the night, and by their orderly and spirited conduct, happily put it out of the power of either party to renew the affray. Several were wounded on both sides, but what is most to be regretted on this occasion, is, that a sense of the injury still rankles in the breasts of the lower orders of the people, which always shews itself whenever any troops of that nation are quartered in the town.

During the present reign, addresses to the throne have become common on every extraordinary occurrence; but on no occasion was one more necessary, than on the affront offered to his majesty, as he was going to the house of lords. in the state coach. A mob, said to have consisted of 200,000 people, accompanied the procession, with every insult common to an enraged multitude, and in the confusion, some person, more diabolical than the rest, broke one of the coach windows, with a pebble, marble, or bullet, shot, as was supposed, from an air gun. This outrage afforded the inhabitants of Reading, a fresh opportunity of expressing their loyalty, in the following affectionate address, proposed by Henry Deane, esq. and seconded and supported by the reverend doctor Valpy:

"TO THE KING'S MOST EXCELLENT MAJESTY,

"The humble address of the mayor, aldermen, and burgesses, and other inhabitants, of your majesty's ancient and loyal borough of Reading.

" May it please your Majesty,

"We, your majesty's most dutiful and loyal subjects, the mayor, aldermen. burgesses, and other inhabitants of your ancient borough of Reading, beg leave to approach your royal presence, with our warmest congratulations, on your late escape from the violent and atrocious attack, made on your majesty's sacred person, by some of the most unprincipled of your factious and deluded subjects. Permit us, at the same time, to express, in the strongest terms, our utmost indignation and abhorrence, of the conduct of those men, who either joined in, or were privy to this insult, the heinousness of which (were it capable of aggravation,) was increased, by its being committed at a time, when

CHAP. V. your majesty was in the exercise of that part of your royal function, which it is the peculiar happiness of Englishmen to witness, and boast of, that of meeting the two other branches of the legislature.

"That the almighty king of kings may continue to be your defence against all your open and secret enemies; that he may, not only protect your person, but direct and bless your councils, so that, during the remainder of your reign, which we ardently wish may be long and happy, we may have nothing to dread, either from foreign or domestic foes, is the fervent and earnest prayer of your majesty's most dutiful and loyal subjects."

This insult offered to his majesty, was followed by a measure that greatly exasperated the great body of the people, already discontented, and struggling with difficulties in support of a war, which they conceived unnecessary, and whose burdens were much aggravated by the unprecedented high price of provisions of all kinds.

In this situation of the country, his majesty's ministers, encouraged perhaps by the loyalty of the people, expressed in the late addresses, and under the pretence of securing his majesty's person, brought into parliament two bills, for the more effectually preventing seditious meetings.

Hitherto the inhabitants of Reading had remained firm in their attachment to their sovereign, and in the support of his ministers; but, on this occasion, when all their dearest rights were struck at, and the privilege of discussing political subjects placed under the control of a single magistrate, whose word might dissolve any meeting however constitutional, they became exceedingly irritated, and were among the first to petition the house of commons against the passing of the bills.

The meeting for this purpose took place in the town-hall, on the 21st of November, and was more numerous than was ever known on a similar occasion; and though some slight symptom of a riotous disposition evinced itself in the course of the debate, yet, upon the whole it was conducted with as little interruption as could have been expected from such a body of people, whose minds were irritated in an extraordinary manner. As this business seemed to involve some of our dearest interests, as Englishmen, we hope to be excused, if, on such an occasion, we deviate from the plan we have hitherto observed, by inserting the substance of the speeches made during the discussion of the question, previous to the insertion of the petition, which gave rise to them.

The business was introduced by a call on the mayor to take the chair, when that gentleman addressed the meeting as follows:

"GENTLEMEN, -- I am very sensible of the honor you intend me, by wishing

me to continue in the chair, but as I am no friend to the present measure, I CHAP. V am totally unfit to retain it. I would ask every well-meaning man in this kingdom, what he has to fear, from restraints laid upon the seditious and turbulent? It is only that description of men who can be restrained by the present bills; and what honest man can wish, that seditious and factious spirits should be left to the mischiefs they are too apt to devise, and, as we have experienced, too ready to execute? I am a firm friend to the constitution: I am a stranger to courts, places, and pensions; but I flatter myself, I am blessed with common sense enough to see, the necessity for great and spirited exertions, to save this country from those intestine broils, that have long been said to be, the only enemies to destroy it."

On the mayor's refusal, B. Lancaster, esq. was called to the chair, and, on his taking the seat, Mr. H. Finch arose, and after charging the mayor with partiality in favor of the executive government, severely animadverted on the ministers, who were, he asserted, taking bold strides, to rob us of the few remaining liberties. He adverted to the difficulties which would occur in forming a meeting for the consideration of a public object, when those who might sign the requisition, must have their names affixed to a public advertisement, and become the mark of vindictive oppression. He asserted, that the unfortunate situation in which we were placed, was solely to be ascribed to the war in which ministers had plunged this country. He reprobated the vast power given to magistrates by the bills, and which, if passed into laws, would, for ever, prevent us from grumbling at the unhappy situation we should thereby be placed in. He then moved the petition, which was seconded by doctor Mitford.

Mr. Walter, in a very sensible, well-digested speech, opposed it. He denied that the bills infringed the least on our liberties: he insisted, that they did not obstruct those meetings which were called by the sheriff or mayor, and that even others, under particular restrictions, might convene a meeting to deliberate on subjects of public importance, but that their sole intent was to stop sedition disseminated by political lecturers, particularly those who deak out treason for pence, and were by that means amassing fortunes at the expence of the unwary.

Dr. Barry observed, that being an inhabitant of this borough, he desired, in common with others, to offer a few ideas on the business of the meeting, and confining himself to that, he would forbear to comment on the perilous and deplorable condition of our country, under the present administration. It had been asserted, but it had been admirably refuted, that the existing laws were not adequate to the suppression of sedition and tumult; and, under such

CHAP. V. a pretence, two bills, striking at the vitals of our liberties, were introduced. It had been the stratagem, he said, of a certain description of people, to make an obsequious approbation of ministerial measures, a criterion of our loyalty to our king; but this he scouted by many apt observations: The master and the servant had two distinct duties to perform; and the latter should not attempt to skulk their misconduct under the wings of the former. The regal character could do no wrong, and the darkness of administration should not be cast around the lustre, which surrounds the throne. Against the sowers of sedition and rebellion, and against the reapers of apostacy and despotism, I am, (said he) alike an enemy.' He pointed out the danger of referring to the severity of one act of parliament, as an argument for the introduction of another; and thus, step by step, the privileges of Englishmen might become as little as their loaf. He concluded by conjuring each individual present, as a part of the community, who were now earnestly applied to, to come forward; for silence, at such alarming strides as were going on, appeared to him both dastardly and criminal. He exhorted them, in justice to themselves, to God, and their country, by every legal and firm endeavor, to hand down to posterity, a fair copy of those blessings, which their ancestors did not hesitate to purchase with their blood.

> Mr. T. Newbery expressed his disapprobation of the petition, and thought the bills necessary. He cautioned the meeting from being led away, by the assertions of persons, who affected discontent, and to be guarded against their insinuations, for there were those, he said, who would be happy to see England lying at the feet of France, in the same prostrate situation that Holland now exhibits.

> Martin Annesley esq. also opposed the petition, and observed, that if a few alterations were made in one particular clause of Mr. Pitt's bill, (which he hoped the good sense of the house of commons would not fail to make) it would then have his hearty concurrence.

> The reverend doctor Valpy, after some preliminary local observations, in which he intreated the numerous class of tradesmen, with whom he was connected, to be guided solely by their own judgment, on the present occasion, replied, in a speech of considerable length, to the arguments used by the speakers in favor of the bills. He declared his abhorrence of the tumultuous meetings of persons, who were not exclusively the inhabitants of a particular place: and said, that if the bills had only for their object, the suppression of such assemblies, they should have his concurrence. But he totally disapproved the arbitrary power given to magistrates, to dissolve a meeting, for expressions, which, in their judgment, were improper. He was sorry to say, that the cause

of the ministry, was more the object of the bills, than that of his majesty. CHAP. V. Of this, the negative given to the amendment of the duke of Leeds, and lord Thurlow, was a striking proof. He then took a review of the history of the statutes respecting treason, from the time of Edward III, and proved, that whenever any alteration had been made in them, under arbitrary administrations, the greatest calamities had befallen either the monarch, or the people, and that the good sense of the nation always returned to the original laws. He was actuated, he said, by the most loyal sentiments, and exclaimed with great warmth, "when this heart shall cease to glow with affection for my king, may it from that moment cease to beat." Were I a republican, he added, I would hold up both my hands in favor of both the bills, so firmly am I persuaded, that if the flame is thus smothered, it will burst out on the constitution with double ruin, and accumulated destruction. He pathetically described the disastrous situation of France; owing, as he said, among other causes, to those ministers who advised their king to banish the parliaments, who had exercised the right of petitioning, and who, in revenge, threw their weight into the scale of the people. He warned his country to shun the same dangers, and conjured the meeting to obey the laws, which, he asserted, were fully sufficient, if properly enforced, to ensure public order.

These were the principal arguments used in the course of this interesting debate, when the question being put on the petition, it was carried by a great majority, and was as follows:\*

"To the honorable the commons of Great Britain, in parliament assembled. "The humble petition of the inhabitants of the borough of Reading, sheweth,-

"That your petitioners have been, in all ages, distinguished for their attachment to the crown, and for their regard to the constitution.

"That, on the late atrocious attack on the person of his majesty, your petitioners were foremost in testifying their indignation at the horrid attempt, and their gratitude to the king of kings for preserving a life so deservedly dear to every loyal heart.

"That, during the present administration, they have been unanimous, to a degree, almost unexampled, in adherence to their principles, and in support of their measures.

"That they unequivocally disapprove, and will unite their endeavors, to check the promiscuous and tumultuary meetings of persons, who are not assem-

\* A counter petition, expressive of their approbation of the two bills, was afterwards presented to the house, signed by 301 electors of the borough.

CHAP. V. bled in the civil or political capacity of members of a county, town, or parish, such as have lately taken place in the neighborhood of the metropolis.

"That, influenced by the same motives of loyalty and patriotism, your petitioners view with considerable alarm two bills introduced into your honorable house: the first, entitled "a bill for the safety and preservation of his majesty's person and government, against treasonable and seditious practices and attempts." The second, "a bill for more effectually preventing seditious meetings and assemblies."

"That, in the former, they see, with the most serious concern, a revival of those attempts to increase the catalogues of treason which were made in former ages by weak and arbitrary administrations, with equal danger to the safety of the monarch, and the liberty of the subject: but which a wiser policy constantly restricted, by recurring to the only beneficial statute on that subject, a statute sanctioned by the experience of more than four hundred years, that of the 23d of Edward III.

"That your petitioners consider the second bill as subversive of the fifth article of the bill of rights, of that solemn compact made at the revolution, between the king and the people, for the establishment of the religion, laws, and liberties of this country, which acknowledges the right of the subject to petition in the capacity already described, of members of a county, town, or parish, and declares all commitments and prosecutions for such petitioning, illegal.

"That they conceive the free exercise of this privilege to be the strongest argument against democratic innovators, whose theories of universal suffrage, and annual parliaments, would acquire some plausibility, if the voice of the people could be suppressed at the arbitrary command of two individuals.

"That, in the opinion of your petitioners, the existing laws are sufficient to protect the civil and political rights of every branch of the constitution; and that, if, according to the opinion of a great law character, the persons who were tried for high treason, had been indicted for sedition, the public order would probably have received a more effectual security.

"That, above all, your petitioners are apprehensive, that the present uneasiness may be traced to a higher cause, than that which is represented as productive of public danger. They, therefore, humbly implore your honorable house, as citizens, as christians, and as men, to take into your more serious consideration, the circumstances of a war, which, whatever difference of opinion may exist on its principle, must be acknowledged to have been ill-conducted in its progress, and calamitous in its consequences.

That, conceiving the restoration of peace to be better calculated to allay

the public discontent, by diminishing the public burthens, than the most CHAP. V. coercive regulations, they humbly hope, that your honorable house will urge the necessity of treating with the executive power of France, under whatever form it may be established, on safe and honorable terms; and particularly, as the more immediate object of this address; they most earnestly entreat, that the bills which they deprecate, may not receive the sanction of your honorable house. And your petitioners shall ever pray."

1796

This opposition, which the measures intended to be adopted, in virtue of these bills, met with from the inhabitants of Reading, did not arise from any disloyalty in the people, but from their conviction, that they evidently tended to intrench on the political liberties, which this country, by the blessing of providence, had enjoyed, since the glorious revolution in 1688. Their loyalty had been conspicuous throughout the whole of the war, notwithstanding the privations they had been reduced to by its effects, but was never more eminently exerted, than in a short time after this meeting, when it being thought necessary to arm the people in defence of the country, this town was among the first to raise a new volunteer corps; for, on the 21st of April, 1798, the mayor, having called a meeting of the principal inhabitants, for the purpose of forming a military association, the motion was cheerfully adopted, and a committee appointed to carry into effect the following resolutions, which were passed unanimously:

1798

" Resolved, that, at a time when the country is in imminent danger of an invasion, it becomes all well-disposed persons to come forward, and contribute to avert this dreadful calamity, by every exertion in their power, to prove their fixed determination to resist, with spirit and indignation, the atrocious designs of a daring and unprincipled enemy.

" Resolved, that this meeting, actuated by their allegiance to their king, and by the duty they owe to themselves and their country, are willing to associate and enrol themselves, for the purpose of defending their families and property within the borough, repelling from thence our inveterate enemy, and strengthening the power of the civil magistrate.

" Resolved, that the several persons enroling themselves, do not claim any exemptions in respect thereof, under any former act of parliament, or receive pay from government, arms and accoutrements excepted, if required: the intention of the persons forming this association, being only the more effectually to assist in guarding the town of Reading, and in promoting its safety.

"Resolved, that no person shall become a member of this association, without the previous approbation of the committee.

CHAP. V.

"Resolved, that the plan of enrolment, and other matters, incident and relating thereto, be under the direction of the chief magistrate and the committee."

1798

In consequence of this additional security to the town, the original corps of volunteers, who had pledged themselves to march in defence of their king and country, to a certain distance from the borough, in case of an invasion, extended their services at this time to any part of the kingdom, whenever they should be called upon by the executive government.

When in addition to these measures, a general subscription was set on foot in every part of the kingdom, for the support of the war; the voluntary contributions collected in this town, amounted to 1605l. 2s. 6d. which, if we consider the weight and magnitude of the taxes, under which the people at that time labored, must appear a considerable sum to have been collected, from a population not much exceeding ten thousand, and is an evident proof, if any were wanting, of the loyalty and patriotism of the inhabitants.

The glorious victory obtained by lord Nelson, over the French fleet at Aboukir, on the coast of Egypt, afforded a fresh opportunity to the inhabitants, to express their sentiments of gratitude to the Almighty, and loyalty to their sovereign, by the following address:

" Most gracious Sovereign,

"We, your majesty's most dutiful and loyal subjects, animated by every sentiment of gratitude, for the many blessings we enjoy, under your majesty's government, beg leave, humbly to address, and warmly to congratulate your majesty, on the late brilliant and decisive victory obtained by your majesty's fleets, under the command of admiral lord Nelson, and sir J. B. Warren. The former has extended the fame of the British arms in Asia and Africa, and has been the instrument of saving whole countries from the miseries, which the system of our enemies would have introduced among them. The latter has happily frustrated their designs on our sister island.

"Next to the devout acknowledgments of the mercies of the Almighty, which we conceive, have been, in some measure, drawn down on this country, by that national spirit of religious gratitude for past favors, of which your majesty has given so august an example; we cannot sufficiently express our admiration of the skill, energy, and valor, of our commanders, and of the discipline, zeal, and intrepidity, of our gallant seamen and marines.

"With the most heartfelt satisfaction, we perceive the unanimity that pervades all ranks of people, in defence of your majesty, and of our happy constitution; and we trust, that by means of this patriotic ardor in the nation, and of wisdom and firmness in your majesty's councils, under the protection of

providence, the cause of social order, good government, and true religion, will CHAP. V. at last be successful.

"That the blessings of a secure, honorable, and lasting peace, may soon be granted to your majesty's dominions; and that your majesty may long reign over an united and happy people, is the fervent wish of your majesty's most loyal and affectionate subjects."

1798

The last year of this century was rendered remarkable, by an attempt on his majesty's life, while sitting in his box at Drury-lane theatre. This was at first considered as the consequence of the traitorous machinations of some deluded people, who, notwithstanding the atrocities that had been committed in France, during the revolution, and the subsequent enslavement of the inhabitants, were still known to be the advocates for their extravagant notions of reform, and were, therefore, considered capable of executing any crime, however wicked or enormous, for the attainment of their end; but, on investigation, the assassin was found to be a maniac, and in no way connected with the party above-mentioned; but as this was not known 'till some time after, the address from this town to his majesty, on the occasion, was founded on the then current opinion, and was as follows:

1800

" May it please your Majesty,

"We, the mayor, aldermen, burgesses, and inhabitants of the borough of Reading, do most anxiously embrace the earliest opportunity, of congratulating your majesty, and the nation in general, on your happy and providential escape, from the late horrid and traitorous attempt upon your sacred person.

"Animated in the highest degree with a sense of duty, loyalty, and affection to your person and government, and conscious of the many blessings we enjoy under your auspicious reign, we cannot but express our astonishment, that any man should be found, so completely depraved, as to raise the arm of violence against a life so deservedly dear to every member of the empire, and upon which the security and happiness of these kingdoms so much depend.

"What motives could have led to such an attempt, we are at a loss to conceive; but we feel ourselves called upon, in conjunction with the rest of our countrymen, to declare, in the strongest terms, our abhorrence and detestation of so wicked an act, and to return our devout thanks to that Almighty Providence which has so graciously preserved your majesty, on this, as well as on former occasions.

"It is our most fervent wish and prayer, that the same good Providence may still watch over and protect your sacred person; and that your majesty may long continue to live and reign, in the hearts and affections of a free, happy, and united people."

CHAP. V.

1800

The last year of the eighteenth century, was also remarkable for the almost total failure of the crops throughout the kingdom, so that though in the neighborhood of Reading they had suffered less from the wetness of the season, than in other districts, yet, on the 20th of December, this year, wheat sold at the enormous price of 180s. per quarter, a price we may venture to say, hitherto unprecedented in this country.

During the eighteenth century, Reading produced very few authors, whose works have been handed down to us, and as most of these have already been noticed in Mr. Coates's History of the Borough, I shall only mention one, whose merits seem to have been overlooked by that gentleman, though equal, if not superior, to some, whose names were thought worthy of being recorded in his work.

Mr. Richard Cole, called by his neighbors, for distinction sake, poet Cole, was born in this town about the year 1715, of creditable parents. Whether he was brought up to any business is uncertain, as in the latter part of his life he lived on a small patrimony, in a very retired way, in St. Mary's Butts. He was rather of an indolent disposition, and, though fond of company, very reserved, particularly among strangers; but to those he was better acquainted with, he would at times be exceedingly communicative and instructive. He was very attentive to young people, whom he found to be of a sober and industrious turn of mind, making them his companions, and by his conversation inspiring them with the love of virtue, and the laudable ambition of exceling in their several callings. A respectable tradesman of this town has been often heard to say, that it was to his advice and encouragement, and by introducing him early in life into better company than people of his line are usually admitted to, that he was indebted for his present fortune and happiness.

Some of his pieces were of a satyrical cast, and written in the style of Butler's Hudibras, but the generality of his writings were of a more serious and religious nature, as most suitable to his turn of mind. He died in 1777, and was buried in St. Mary's church yard.

The following specimen of his poetry is selected, not as possessing a superiority over his other works, but, because it is inscribed to the memory of an artist of whom so little is known, that he has been overlooked by Mr. Coates:

"To the Memory of Mr. John Weller, Limner, of Reading, who died December 24, 1763.

"If thou canst yet, lamented shade! attend The heartfelt sorrows of a faithful friend, Accept the humble homage of a lay, The only tribute that the muse can pay,

In blameless confidence who dares impart, By song sincere, the dictates of the heart. Friend to thy fame, but more a friend to truth, Thou once kind guide of my unstable youth, Tho' well thy worth a loftier lyre demands, Than that which trembles in my artless hands-Yet, more approved by thee, th' unfeigned verse Than gilded trophies to adorn thy hearse, For, truth triumphant, crowns the immortal just, When trophies fail, and marble falls to dust. Unjustly, thou, a deist hast been deem'd, (So Clerk and Hoadley were by some esteem'd) No deist thou, nor zealous bigot blind, Whose slavish principles enthral the mind; But genuine virtue, well digested faith, Sustain'd thy progress in religion's path; Replete thy mind with universal love, How didst thou imitate the blest above! What, all the wise and good, would wish to know, What, once the great messiah taught below, What, his true sons, dispers'd through various climes, Have, faithful, tender'd to succeeding times, Was thine to know, to cherish and receive, By hope to trust in, and by faith believe; The gospel's practical, important plan, Glory to God-on earth, good will to man. Yet—did thy modest merit live unknown! And scarcely mark'd, save by the muse alone; Tho' genius, learning, science, all combined, To spread attracting influence o'er mankind! While a good name to human sense is sweet, While virtue's praise, with pleasure we repeat, The grateful muse, essays to hymn thy name, And bid thy merit shine in future fame; Tho' scenes more blissful now thy mind engage, Than charm poor mortals on this changeful stage.

CHAP. V.

1800

Go then, my friend! enjoy thy vast reward, Careless of man's weak malice, or regard;
Remain it mine, thy life to imitate
By calm submission to the will of fate,

CHAP. V.

1800

To follow truth e'en through a thorny way, And meet the blest, in realms of happy day, Where virtues heighten'd to perfection rise, And, clad in light, possess their native skies. The world, unworthy of a soul like thine, Shall see it one day, in refulgence shine, Where harmony celestial dwells, and peace, And vain distinctions, shall for ever cease."

Another artist, though I believe not a native of this town, has some claim to our notice, from having resided many years in it, this was Mr. John Rowell, professor of the ancient art of staining glass. Sir Horace Walpole speaks of him, as one of those, through whom this noble art was preserved, and by whom it was delivered down to the present time. His colors are said to have been glaring, but not lasting. Mr. Coates has given a list of his works, but it is imperfect. The only one to be depended on, is in his own appeal to the public, in the following advertisement, published in the Reading Mercury, February 12, 1753:

"John Rowell, professor of the ancient art of staining glass, late of Wycomb, Bucks, but now of Reading, having no son to succeed him, doth therefore, for the encouragement and improvement of that curious art, propose to explain and teach the same, to any proper person, for a reasonable consideration. Performances by him are to be seen, in the chancel window at Hambleton, near Henley in Oxfordshire, in which are the twelve apostles, and Moses and Aaron, in their robes, with a large window of our savior's resurrection triumphing over death and the grave. The figures as big as the life.

"Also, a large altar window of our savior's last supper, at Apthorpe, in Northamptonshire.

"At Newnham church, in Hampshire, is the history of our savior, making himself known to his two disciples, at Emmaus, by breaking of bread.

" The same history, in a chancel window, at Pen, in Buckinghamshire.

"Also, a large history of our savior's passion in the garden, in a chapel window of the lord bishop of Worcester, at Hartlebury.

"Likewise, Moses and Aaron, supporting the ten commandments, in an altar window, at Arborfield in Berks."

In the Gentleman's Magazine, for October 1758, is a letter, signed Edgar Bochart, giving an account of an enormous water serpent, that was killed in 1578, in a pond, belonging to a farm house, near Hitchendon, in the county of Bucks. The house, he observes, had formerly been an hospital of the knightstemplars, and the circumstances of the monster's death, had, soon after the

transaction, been painted on the walls of the refectory, and renewed as often as CHAP. V. found necessary. The present painting, he adds, was done about forty years since, by the famous Rowell, the glass stainer.

As Mr. Rowell, in the former part of his life, carried on the business of a painter and glazier, at High Wycomb, in the same county, it is very probable that this anecdote is correct, though we have no other account of his paintings, except on glass.

1800

Mr. Rowell died at his house in London-street, in 1756, and was succeeded in the business of a plumber, by the late Mr. Truss, who had been his apprentice in that branch, but the art of staining glass, so far as was peculiar to himself, died with him. Mr. Truss has a very good portrait of Mr. Rowell, said to be a striking likeness, but by whom drawn is uncertain.

# History of Reading.

### CHAPTER VI.

CHAP. VI

1801

THE nineteenth century commenced with the melancholy prospect of famine, arising from the scarcity, and consequent high price of corn; by which the poorer classes of society, and even many of the middle rank in life, were reduced to the greatest distress. Bread, made of barley, or wheat mixed with other grain, and even pulse, was recommended and adopted by the rich, but neither precepts, nor examples, could prevail on the poor to comply with so salutary a measure, till compelled by dire necessity. Rice was purchased and distributed at low prices, and soup-shops were established by public subscription, but so rooted are the prejudices of the poor, that few would accept the assistance offered them by this means, and those that did, considered it rather in the light of an insult offered to their feelings, than the effect of a charitable disposition. The price of wheat kept gradually encreasing till the middle of March, when it was sold in this market, at an average of 195s, the quarter; but as the harvest approached, with the prospect of an abundant crop, the price of this necessary article of life began to decline, and the expectation of a general peace, afforded by the signing of the preliminary articles, in the autumn of this year, brought it to nearly its usual level before the commencement of the next.

1802

Peace between the belligerent powers having been signed early in the spring of this year, under the auspices of Mr. Addington, high steward of this borough, who had succeeded Mr. Pitt in the office of chancellor of the exchequer, a meeting of the inhabitants was called, for the purpose of addressing his majesty on the occasion, when Martin Annesley, esq. being called to the chair, the address was proposed by Mr. alderman Blandy, and seconded by Mr. Robert Harris.

The rev. doctor Valpy opposed the address, in a speech that might be considered prophetic of what this country has since experienced. "He wished to know, (he said) whether it was the intent of the meeting, that the address should be signed individually, or by the chairman in the name of the inhabitants. If the former, he had nothing further to say: every person might sign whatever he pleased: but in the latter case, he must assure the meeting,

in order to remove the appearance of unanimity on that subject, that there were several gentlemen of respectability, both present and absent, who, like himself, could not be induced to congratulate his majesty, on what they conceived to be the triumph of the French republic. If the ministry found themselves obliged, by hard necessity, to submit to the present terms, he was sure they could not wish the high spirit of Englishmen, to be so degraded, as to express any satisfaction at a treaty, which could only be considered as a suspension of arms, obtained by the enemy, to deprive us of our conquests, and to consolidate and extend his own. A treaty which was inconsistent, equally with the interest, and with the dignity, of this country.

CHAP. VI.

1801

"No man, (he said) could love peace more than he did; but, he could not consent to sacrifice future permanent security, for present temporary peace. No man, it was well known, entertained a higher respect, or a more sincere regard for the minister; but he would not sacrifice his public, to his private feelings. He wished that every man had spoken his real sentiments, with the same independence and disinterestedness, on an event which must produce an alarming degeneracy in the national character. Had that been the case, the definitive treaty could not have been more different than it was from the preliminary articles; but, it would have been as much more advantageous, and honorable, as it was now detrimental and disgraceful. He would not detain the meeting by dwelling on the particulars of the treaty, on the situation of this country, during the war, during the negociation, and at the peace, or on the acquisitions we had made; a short time, he feared, would give a melancholy proof of the dangers to which we had, by this treaty, subjected ourselves."

A counter address was then submitted to the meeting by the rev. doctor Barry, and seconded by doctor Mitford, but, on the shew of hands, the original one was adopted by the meeting, and was as follows:

" To the king's most excellent majesty,

"We, your majesty's most dutiful and loyal subjects, the mayor, aldermen, burgesses, and inhabitants of the borough of Reading, beg leave to offer to your majesty, our most sincere congratulations, on the happy return of peace.

"We are truly sensible, that to the favor of divine Providence, aiding the persevering valor of your majesty's forces, by sea and land, through the most arduous struggle, in which this kingdom has ever been engaged, and the wisdom of your majesty's councils, at a time when the world was looking for a prolongation of the dreadful ravages of war, we are indebted for the accomplishment of this auspicious event.

"That your majesty's dominions, by the goodness of divine Providence, may long continue to enjoy the blessings of peace; that its progress may be

CHAP. marked by plenty and prosperity; and that the life of your majesty may be lengthened to the latest period, for your own happiness, and the benefit and advantage of your united kingdoms, is our earnest and ardent prayer."

On the renewal of hostilities, in the succeeding year, this borough again addressed his majesty, in the following loyal and patriotic effusion of their sentiments:

46 TO THE KING'S MOST EXCELLENT MAJESTY.

"The humble address of the mayor, aldermen, burgesses, and inhabitants of the borough of Reading.

" May it please your Majesty,

"We, your majesty's most dutiful subjects, the mayor, aldermen, burgesses, and inhabitants of the borough of Reading, humbly beg permission to approach your majesty, at this important crisis, with a declaration of that active loyalty, and affectionate attachment to your royal person and government, which have always distinguished the inhabitants of this ancient borough.

"We have beheld with just indignation, the restless spirit, and ambitious views, of a power, whom no concessions can sooth, whom no treaties can bind.

" The French government, not conciliated by the endeavors of your majesty, to restore the blessings of peace, to a world wasted with the ravages of war, have invariably, since the treaty of Amiens, pursued a system of hostility to the commerce and constitution of this kingdom, and to the liberties of mankind. Conscious that they could not succeed in their design to subjugate the Continent, while Britain interposed her protecting arm, they have affected to. represent her as secluded from the concerns of the rest of Europe, and cherished the vain expectation, that they could annihilate her political influence.

"The forbearance and moderation of your majesty's councils, instead of producing reciprocal sentiments of amity, and communication of good offices, have been repaid only with personal insults, and with national injuries.

"In these circumstances, it must be a soothing consolation to your majesty, to observe the unanimity displayed by your people, in their determination to resist the common enemy of the repose, and of the independence of Europe. And we beg leave to assure your majesty, that the inhabitants of Reading yield to no class of your majesty's subjects, in the warmth of their feelings, and in the sincerity of their professions, to maintain the noblest cause, in which their hearts can be engaged-the honor of their king, and the prosperity of their country.

" It is our fervent prayer, that, under the protection of a wise and gracious Providence, your majesty may be enabled, by the valor of your fleets and armies, and the zealous support of your people, to place the commercial interests of

the nation on a basis, which cannot be shaken, by the intrigues of secret, or CHAP. the violence of open hostility."

VI.

On the fifteenth of July, this year, a continual firing of cannon was heard throughout the day, by many of the inhabitants of the town, and neighboring villages. This phenomenon being circulated with great industry, by those that heard it, occasioned a considerable anxiety during that, and the succeeding days, many people here imagining that the French had actually put their threat of invasion in execution. This anxiety was not removed 'till some days after, when it became known, that the firing proceeded from the batteries at Boulogne, which had been the whole of that day firing at our cruizers, who were endeavoring to cut off a fleet of vessels coming from Flushing. We should not have mentioned this circumstance, had it not been for the incontestible proof it affords, of the explosion of great guns having been heard at upwards of one hundred miles distance. At a subsequent engagement at the same place, in 1805, the report of the guns was heard here, by many of the inhabitants, equally distinct, and clear. At both these periods, the wind was at N. E. and nearly calm.

1804

1805

1807

At a meeting of the inhabitants in the town-hall, on the 6th of May, this year, in consequence of a requisition to the mayor, for the purpose of addressing his majesty, on the catholic question, which had for some time agitated the minds of the people, and eventually caused the unprecedented dissolution of parliament, within seven months from the last general election, the address was proposed by Mr. Wilsdon, and seconded by Mr. Jesse, but H. Marsh, esq. having proposed an adjournment, it occasioned a very interesting debate, in which the reverend W. Marsh, the reverend doctor Barry, the reverend C. Mitford, and Mr. Ring, supported the address; and the reverend doctor Valpy, Mr. Walter, the reverend — Gauntlett, Mr. Monck, and Mr. E. Vines, spoke in favor of the adjournment.

On the question being put from the chair, the shew of hands was so equal, it was impossible to determine which had the majority; it was, therefore, agreed, that each side should be told out, when it appeared there were 115 for the address, and 117 against it.

Though the catholic question was the leading point in dispute, there can be no doubt that political considerations of another kind, had a great weight in the determination of the meeting.

The late dismissal of his majesty's ministers, with the subsequent dissolution of parliament, had irritated many, who had been warm supporters of the late administration, and induced them to come forward on this occasion, in opposition to a measure, which otherwise, from their well known loyalty to

VI.

1807

CHAP. their king, and love for the constitution, they would, there is no doubt, have supported with their accustomed energy.

While one party deprecated the danger that threatened the established church, by the proposed emancipation of the catholics, by placing the command of the army, and navy, in the hands of a bigotted set of men, devoted to a foreign head, whom they acknowledged to be their spiritual chief, although he was at that very time under the influence of our greatest enemy; of men whose forefathers, during the reign of James II. when they enjoyed the rights now so carnestly solicited, had attempted to subvert our national church, and to introduce an arbitrary government: the other displayed all their eloquence, in the praise of mutual toleration, on the harmlessness of the modern catholics, their reduced numbers, and the benefit to be derived to the united kingdoms, in the present war, by attaching to our interests, by a liberal conduct, the hearts of a loyal and brave people, who had too long been held in a state of boudage, unbecoming the subjects of a free country.

Such were the arguments used in the course of the debate, and though a negative was put on the address, it would be an injustice to tax the majority on the division, with the want of loyalty and respect to their king; for although some few might perhaps vote against it, from party motives, vet the greater part appeared convinced, that the catholics were entitled to all the privileges that they themselves enjoyed as protestants.

1808

The convention agreed upon in the following year, between our commanders, in Portugal, and the French general Junot, attracted the attention of the people throughout the country. Addresses were sent up from every part of the kingdom, among which was the following from this borough, proposed by Mr. Monck, and seconded by Mr. Ovey:

er to the king's most excellent majesty.

" Most gracious Sovereign,

"We, your majesty's most dutiful and loval subjects, the inhabitants of the borough of Reading, beg leave to approach your majesty, with our assurances of attachment to your sacred person, and to your mild and paternal government.

"We feel ourselves most grateful to your majesty, for the zeal which you have manifested in the emancipation of Spain and Portugal, and we congratulate your majesty on the two splendid victories obtained by your forces in the latter country. We owe it also to your majesty, the sovereign of a free people, as faithful subjects, ever alive to the true support and honor of your crown, not to conceal our sentiments on any public emergency, and to declare to you, that our disappointment and regret were extreme, when we found the

heroic exertions, and brilliant successes of your majesty's army in Portugal, terminating in the most afflicting, and apparently, most humiliating convention.

CHAP. VI.

"We are far from presuming to prejudge the case of any individual, but we most humbly beseech your majesty, that you will cause to be instituted a full, open, and effectual investigation; so that, if any persons, either at home or abroad, shall be found culpable, they may experience such signal marks of your displeasure, as may serve for an example, and tend to the promotion of your majesty's service, and to the glory of your arms."

1808

Soon after Mr. Gleed's entering into his office this year, he issued an injunction to the inhabitants against the heinous sin, as it is called, of selling goods in the morning of the sabbath day, which by no means tended to lessen the evil, (if such it be) at the same time that it exasperated the minds of many of the inhabitants, who found themselves, under the sanction of their chief magistrate, subjected to the prying curiosity, and insolent interference of the most ignorant, and superstitious part of the community.

1809

An enquiry having taken place at the commencement of this year, on the motion of Mr. Wardle, in the house of commons, respecting the conduct of his royal highness the duke of York, in the disposal of commissions in the army; and the decision of that house appearing to the public at large, to have been in opposition to the evidence given at the bar, and tending to skreen his royal highness from the punishment due to such offences, public meetings took place in most of the cities and boroughs in the kingdom, to express their dissatisfaction of the conduct of the majority of the house, and to return their thanks to colonel Wardle, and those who supported his motion.

In some places, advantage was taken, from the present fermentation of the public mind, to introduce into the discussion of the question, the subject of a reform in parliament. This had often before been brought forward by the opposition, to serve their own political purposes, and as often carefully concealed from public notice as soon as these purposes were attained. Thus Mr. Pitt, Mr. Fox, and Mr. Grey had at different times brought the question before the house, but without any intention of succeeding, as was afterwards evident to all, by their silence on the subject when they got into power; or if, for decency sake, they brought it forward, they gave it so feeble a support, that it had been constantly rejected by the house. Though the people however had in this manner been frequently duped by the demagogues of the day, yet no sooner was the subject revived by sir Francis Burdett, and others, who wished to be thought the friends of the people, than they adopted the flattering idea, with as much eagerness and simplicity, as if they had never been deceived before. Among these, the town of Reading was one of the first to add a.

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1809

clause to that purpose, in the requisition to the mayor to call a hall, not of the electors only, but very properly, of all the resident inhabitants. At this meeting, which was attended by upwards of a thousand persons, the necessity of a parliamentary reform was enlarged upon by Mr. Monck in his introductory speech on the occasion, and met with such universal approbation, that the measure became a striking figure in the following resolutions; almost all of which were carried unanimously, and those that were not, had only two or three dissenting voices:

"Resolved, that corrupt practices have been found to exist in the grant of commissions and appointments in the army, no less disgraceful to the character of the late commander in chief, as a soldier, than ruinous to the public service.

"Resolved, that Gwyllym Lloyd Wardle, esq. is entitled to the thanks of his country, for the zeal, integrity, and intrepidity, with which he maintained the charges of corruption against his royal highness the duke of York, in spite of the lukewarmness of the leading members of opposition, and the open hostility, and direct menaces of ministers.

"Resolved, that Charles Shaw Lefevre, esq. one of the representatives for this borough, has deserved well of his constituents, and conferred honor on their choice, by the plain, intelligible, independent, consistent, and decisive manner, in which he acted and voted, during the whole course of the late inquiry.

"Resolved, that our thanks are due to sir Francis Burdett, bart. who seconded Mr. Wardle; Lord Viscount Folkstone, sir Samuel Romilly, kt. Samuel Whitbread, esq. admiral Markham, the gallant general Ferguson, and the remainder of the one hundred and twenty-five members, who supported Mr. Wardle's motion.

"Resolved, that the vote of the house of commons, upon the motion of the chancellor of the exchequer, for the acquittal of his royal highness the duke of York from all knowledge of the corrupt practices proved, has done violence both to the understanding, and feelings of Englishmen, and affords a prominent and striking example of the very imperfect representation of the people.

"Resolved, that the only effectual barrier against the inroads of corruption, is to be found in the constitutional resort to obtain a fair and faithful representation of the people in their house of commons.

"Resolved, that the number of placemen, and pensioners, having seats in the house of commons, is a growing evil; contrary to an ancient resolution of that house; destructive of the independence of parliament; and that the number ought to be restricted to certain officers of state, whose presence may be expedient in the house of commons.

"Resolved, that the state of the decayed boroughs in the united kingdom, returning members to parliament, and which have become by lapse of time the private property of individuals, is one great cause of the present wide extended and deplorable corruption, and demands the serious attention of parliament, as a mockery of representation.

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1809

"Resolved, that the restoration of triennial parliaments, agreeable to the statute 6th of William and Mary, would greatly check corruption, and in the words of the preamble to that memorable act, would 'tend very much to the happy union, and good agreement of the king and people.'

"Resolved, that the only way to have independent men in parliament, is, to send them independent there; and, that the example set by Westminster, in the manner of electing sir Francis Burdett, cannot be too highly commended, and is worthy to be imitated by all the free boroughs in the kingdom.

"Resolved, that during the present reign, every successive administration has yielded to the force, or to the temptation of the present system of corruption; and the result of every change has been, to hold the people in delusionand not to remove, but perpetuate abuses.

"Resolved, that we have no hopes, that his majesty's present ministers will ever seriously and earnestly take in hand the work of reformation; as the proceedings in parliament have fully proved them to be, the ministers of the crown only, and not of the people; the stiflers of enquiry, and the abettors of corruption."

The additional resolution, proposed by the rev. doctor Valpy, "that the vote of John Simeon, esq. one of the representatives for this borough, in favor of Mr. Banks's amendment to Mr. Wardle's original motion, is highly deserving of the thanks of his constituents;" was negatived by a great majority.

The following resolution was then put by doctor Valpy, and carried unanimously, "that, in order to set the example of purity of representation, it is unfit for any elector of this borough, to accept a public dinner, or any other gratuity, directly or indirectly, from his representative."—The unanimous thanks of the meeting was then given to Thomas Gleed, esq. mayor, for the readiness with which he called the meeting; for his attention to the business of the day; and, for his able, impartial, and conciliating conduct in the chair.

On the 25th of June, this year, a mutiny took place among the local militia, while exercising in the Forbury, on being refused their marching guinea, previous to their dismissal on the next day; on which occasion, several companies laid down their arms; to which conduct, as it was afterward asserted, they had been incited by some of the volunteers imprudently urging them on, and promising to stand by them. How far this assertion is founded

1809

CHAP, in fact, we know not, but certain it is, the officers of the volunteers were by no means implicated in the charge; neither could it be expected, that they should be answerable for the conduct of their men while off from duty; notwithstanding this, however, on complaint being made at the war-office, by the commander of the local militia, on the supposed misconduct of the regiment of Reading volunteers, they were in the July following dismissed from his majesty's service, without the smallest remuneration, and without even a compliment being paid them for their meritorious conduct, in coming forward, in the hour of danger, to serve their country almost wholly at their own expence.

Whether the return these brave fellows met with from his majesty's ministers, for their patriotic service, and the self-denial they must frequently have experienced, in attending their military duties in all seasons, and in all weathers, was merited, the country must judge; but certainly common prudence ought to have dictated a different conduct. The danger may be deferred, but is not wholly warded off; and should the time again arrive, when the services of the volunteers shall be again called for, the treatment these have received, will not, we fear, be an inducement for others to come forward in defence of their king and country.

On his majesty's entering into the fiftieth year of his reign, in the month of October, in the present year, it was proposed by some friends of government, that the anniversary should be kept as a jubilec throughout the kingdom, in such manner as should be thought most advisable to each town or village. In consequence of this intention, the following requisition was sent to the mayor:

" Sir,-We, the undersigned, request you to call a meeting of the corporation, as early as may be convenient, to consider of a plan to celebrate, in the most appropriate and respectful manner, the fiftieth anniversary of the accession of our venerated and beloved sovereign to the throne; an event almost unexampled in the history of this country:

Richard Richards. Robert Harris. Charles Poulton. Thomas Sowdon. John Bulley. W. B. Simonds. William Blandy. John Stephens.

William Andrews. George Gilbertson. Launcelot Austwick. John Blandy. William Garrard. William Stephens, Thomas Ward.

In consequence of this requisition, a hall was called, and a committee appointed, consisting of the following gentlemen, to take the same into consideration:

| T              | HE MAYOR | t.               | Снар. |
|----------------|----------|------------------|-------|
| Mr. Poulton.   | 11       | Mr. Austwick.    | VI.   |
| Mr. Knapp.     |          | Mr. J. Blandy.   | ~~    |
| Mr. Annesley.  |          | Mr. Simonds.     | 1809  |
| Mr. Maul.      |          | Mr. Harris.      |       |
| Mr. Blandy.    |          | Mr. J. Richards. |       |
| Mr. Westbrook. | N        | Mr. Ward.        |       |

by whom the following plan was proposed.

That the bells be rung at the several churches, at six o'clock in the morning, and at different intervals through the day, 'till nine in the evening, and that colors be displayed on the different towers.

"That the corporation meet in common hall, with their gowns, and insignia of office, at eleven o'clock, and proceed from thence to St. Lawrence's church.

"That the several societies be requested to attend divine service on that day; and that a sum of money be presented to each of them (if acceptable,) towards promoting any rational entertainment.

" That Mr. Binfield be requested to play the organ, and to select appropriate pieces of music.

"That the several charity and Sunday schools also attend divine service in their respective parishes; and that a cake be afterwards given, in the marketplace, to each scholar, and half-a-crown to the master or mistress.

"That there be a public dinner and ball, at the town hall, and tickets issued for the dinner, at 7s. 6d. each (exclusive of wine) and for the ball at 5s. That stewards be appointed, and no tickets for dinner delivered out after Saturday, the 21st instant.

"That instead of an illumination, it be earnestly recommended that a subscription be entered into, and that the vicars, church-wardens, and overseers of the several parishes, be requested to assist in the distribution thereof, so as to enable every one of his majesty's faithful but indigent subjects to unite and participate in the general festivity of the day.

"That Messrs Marsh, Deane, Westbrook, and Deane, and Messrs. Stephens, Simonds and Harris, be requested to receive such subscriptions, and that the names of the subscribers be advertised.

"That the rev. doctor Valpy, Henry Marsh, W. Southgate, James Wardsworth, John Dorset, and John Berkley Monck, esqrs. be added to the committee, and requested to attend their next and future meetings.

That a copy of these resolutions be sent to the right honorable the

CHAP. high steward, the members and recorder for the borough, and to the vicars of the respective parishes."

1809

But the inhabitants at large, conceiving themselves aggrieved, in being excluded from expressing their sentiments publicly on this occasion, another requisition, respectfully signed, was presented to the mayor, requesting him to call a meeting of the inhabitants of the borough, " to take into consideration the propriety of celebrating the day." To this it was answered, that "the terms of the requisition appeared exceptionable; and that it was not expedient to call such meeting; as the object of the requisition was to consider the propriety of celebrating the approaching anniversary, and not the mode of carrying the same into effect."

In consequence of this refusal, the gentlemen who signed the requisition, and whose names had been added to the committee appointed by the corporation, withdrew their names, and called a meeting of the inhabitants in the Forbury, independent of the mayor and corporation, which was numerously attended; when John Hooper, esq. being called to the chair, the following resolutions were carried unanimously:

"Resolved, 1st, That it will be proper to commemorate the ensuing anniversary of his majesty's accession, by attendance on divine service, at our respective churches, or at other places of worship.

"2dly, That a dutiful, loyal, and congratulatory address be presented to his majesty, suitable to the occasion.

"3dly, That it is the opinion of this meeting, that it will be more agreeable to the will of the Almighty, and more consonant to the paternal feelings of his majesty, that all fire-works, illuminations, and other useless expenditure should be avoided and discountenanced; and that, in lieu thereof, a subscription be opened, to be called the TOWN SUBSCRIPTION, for the purpose of relieving, and liberating such of the debtors, now in the county gaol, in this borough, as shall be deemed proper objects; and also, for distributing bread, meat, and beer to the poor inhabitants, under distinct heads of subscription.

"4thly, That subscriptions be received at both the banks, and the postoffice; and that one churchwarden and one overseer of each parish, the rev. doctor Valpy, rev. Archibald Douglas, rev. John Holloway, Messrs. James Wardsworth, Henry Marsh, John Hooper, Thomas White, E. S. White, Thos. Letchworth, George Hetherington, John Adams, Edward Vines, Benjamin Williams, and Francis Millard, be appointed to apply the money to be subscribed in manner aforesaid.

"5thly, That is is the undoubted privilege of the inhabitants of this borough, in common with their fellow subjects, as confirmed to them by the bill of rights, to assemble on all public occasions, and to make their sentiments known to his majesty and the people; and that to throw obstacles in the way of this privilege, is in direct violation of the principles of the constitution.

CHAP.

"6thly, That the mayor and corporation, in refusing to convene a public meeting of the inhabitants in the town-hall, to enable them to express their sentiments, and to decide and act for themselves on the ensuing accession, and in attempting to give their own plan exclusive authority, have acted partially, and disrespectfully, to the whole borough, and deserve the severest censure of their fellow townsmen.

1809

"7thly, That, as the mayor and corporation have acted in exclusion of the public opinion, it is the duty of the inhabitants to with-hold all aid from, and support to the plan recommended by them on this memorable occasion.

There was one dissenting voice to these two last resolutions.

"Sthly, That the thanks of this meeting be given to the rev. doctor Valpy, H. Marsh, W. Southgate, J. Dorset, and J. B. Monck, esqrs. who signed the requisition to the late mayor, to call a meeting of the inhabitants—and especially to doctor Valpy, Messrs. Marsh and Monck, who have so magnanimously asserted and protected the inalienable rights of the people."

Notwithstanding this disagreement between the members of the corporation and the inhabitants, the day was spent with the utmost harmony, almost every individual in the town partaking of the plentiful provisions provided for them, either from the public subscription, amounting to 2661. 7s. or the bounty of private individuals. And what added to the hilarity of the day, was the free discharge of all the Danish prisoners on parole in the town, to the amount of nearly 200, who paraded the streets, expressing their gratitude and thanks to the best of kings.

The following address was afterwards unanimously voted, at a meeting called by the corporation, held for the purpose, and presented to his majesty by Mr. Ryder, and most graciously received:

"The humble address of the mayor, aldermen, and burgesses of the borough of Reading, in the county of Berks.

" Most gracious sovereign,

"We, your majesty's most dutiful and loyal subjects, the mayor, aldermen, and burgesses of your majesty's ancient borough of Reading, beg leave to express our abundant joy in approaching your throne, with our sincere and loyal congratulations, on the arrival of a period so remarkable as the fiftieth year of your benevolent reign.

"It has pleased the Almighty to ordain, that your majesty should reign in times of unexampled difficulty and danger, from causes which have affected

CHAP, the whole state of society throughout Europe, but he has yet thought fit to shew, by the illustrious example of your majesty's throne, how firm, even in the most arduous struggles, are the supports of justice, mercy, and piety.

1809

" It cannot often happen, that the reign of a king should be extended to fifty years; but much more rare must it be, in the nature of things, for a sovereign to find the esteem, admiration, affection and gratitude of his people, constantly increasing through the whole of such period.

"We cannot conclude our dutiful address on the present joyful occasion, without adding our most cordial wishes and prayers, that your majesty's paternal reign may be continued, till some happy turn of public prospects shall give delight, as well as lustre, to the remaining days of a sovereign, so remarkably distinguished by the protecting care of Providence."

On the commitment, this year, of sir Francis Burdett to the tower, for a libel on the house of commons, on the miscarriage of the expedition to Walcheren, the public mind became very much discontented, and vented itself in petitions to the house of commons, from most of the counties and principal towns in the kingdom; among the latter, Reading may be said, almost to have taken the lead, by a requisition to the mayor, signed by more than 250 electors, to convene a meeting of the inhabitants, to "take into consideration the state of the country, in relation both to foreign and domestic occurrences, particularly the policy and conduct of the late expedition to Walcheren, the imprisonment of Gale Jones, and sir Francis Burdett, and the necessity of a reform in the representation of the people."

Charles Poulton, esq. the mayor, after opening the meeting, withdrew, when Thomas White, esq. was called to the chair, and the following resolutions were carried unanimously:

"Resolved, that the late expedition to Walcheren has been marked by an enormous waste of men and money, and that its failure is attributable to the misconceptions, blunders, and dissensions of his majesty's ministers; and, that it is with surprise and pain, we have witnessed, that their gross folly and incapacity had not been punished, or even censured, by the house of commons, whereby the authors of our calamities are emboldened to proceed in the prosecution of measures, which have uniformly tended to make the nation contemptible abroad, and dissatisfied at home.

"2dly, That we have viewed with the deepest concern, the commitment of Mr. Gale Jones to Newgate, and of sir Francis Burdett, bart. to the tower, for alleged libels, without evidence on oath, or trial by jury, because all charges of libel are cognizable, and may, or ought to be prosecuted in the courts of law; and, because we consider summary commitments, by way of

punishment for libel, contrary to the spirit of our laws, subversive of the trial by jury, and the liberty of the subject, and the no less invaluable blessing—the liberty of the press.

CHAP: VI.

"3dly, That the want of a more full and effectual representation of the people in parliament, is every day more and more apparent, and that until this be effected, there can be no solid security for our rights, nor any hope, that grievances will be redressed at home, and the glory of England promoted, as it ought to be, abroad.

1810

"4thly, That a respectful petition be presented to the commons' house of parliament, praying for the immediate discharge of Mr. J. G. Jones, and sir Francis Burdett, from imprisonment, and that the petition now read be adopted.

"5thly, That another petition be presented to the commons' house of parliament, for a more full and effectual representation of the people in parliament, and that the petition now read, be adopted."

These petitions were, as follow:

"To the honorable the commons of the united kingdom, in parliament assembled,

The petition of the inhabitants of the borough of Reading, in the county of Berks, sheweth—

"That your petitioners consider it to be one of the undoubted rights of the people, to lay before your honorable house their grievances of every kind; and that this right in no wise ceaseth, or is diminished, when the cause of complaint originates within the walls of your honorable house.

"Your petitioners have witnessed, with great concern, the commitment of Mr. Gale Jones, to Newgate, and sir Francis Burdett, bart. to the tower, for alleged libels, without any examination of evidence upon oath, and without any trial by jury. Far be it from your petitioners, to wish to disarm your honorable house of any privilege that serves to maintain its dignity, independence, and just preponderence; but, your petitioners have been taught, and believe, that the privileges of your honorable house are not of a higher value, than the prerogatives of the crown; and that both the one and the other were given solely for the benefit of the people, the ultimate end and object of all good and rational governments.

"The two greatest benefits that Englishmen enjoy, as a free people, are, the liberty of person, and the liberty of the press. The right of public discussion is the strongest barrier against every species of tyranny and oppression; and, if at any time this right be abused, for purposes of libel or sedition, these offences are cognizable in the courts of law. Summary commitments in execution, by way of punishment for libel, are considered by your petitioners, as

CHAP. an encroachment on the trial by jury, injurious to the liberty of the subject, and the liberty of the press. The power of commitments may be necessary for the protection of your honorable house, in cases where obstruction is actually given, or menaced; but your petitioners are not aware, that any such obstructions made the exercise of that power necessary in the cases of Mr. John Gale Jones and sir Francis Burdett, or that any mischief or inconvenience was likely to have ensued, if their cases had been left to be decided in the ordinary course of law.

"We therefore most humbly pray, that your honorable house will discharge Mr. John Gale Jones, and sir Francis Burdett, from their confinement. "And your petitioners shall ever pray."

"To the honorable the commons of the united kingdom, in parliament assembled.

"The petition of the inhabitants of the borough of Reading, in the county of Berks, sheweth-

"That your petitioners have observed of late years, and especially during the present administration, an entire difference of opinion between the people and their representatives in parliament, upon almost every question of general feeling and national importance; and being sensible how much the stability of our constitution depends upon the restoration of mutual confidence, we sincerely lament that difference, and beg leave to draw your attention to the grounds and causes of it.

"Your petitioners believe, that the chief grounds and causes of this difference will be found in the very defective mode of representation which prevails at present, in the number of placemen and pensioners that have seats in your honorable house, and in the duration of parliaments.

"It is well known to your honorable house, that many boroughs, returning members to parliament, are utterly decayed, and become the property of individuals, and are now the subject, like any other property, of barter and exchange. By this means, the people find themselves excluded from the share which they ought to have in elections; and a body of men have been introduced into parliament, that are an anomaly in the constitution, being neither called by the king, nor elected by the people. Under such a state of things, your petitioners think that no exaggeration, which was said in your honorable house by a late distinguished member, 'that no honest man can long remain minister of the country.' Your petitioners lament extremely, that in the course of last session, two of his majesty's ministers were charged with being concerned in the disgraceful traffic of boroughs; and that this practice, al-

though reprobated, by your learned and upright speaker, with becoming zeal and indignation, was justified, 'as being as notorious as the sun at noon day.'

CHAP. VI.

honorable house, and the people, is the number of placemen and pensioners that are permitted to have seats in it, by which the influence of ministers is increased beyond control. Upon any other supposition, we cannot conceive it possible, that his majesty's present incapable and arbitrary ministers, should be still permitted to carry on the government of the country, after having wasted our resources, in fruitless expeditions, and having shewn no vigor, but in support of antiquated prejudices, and in attacks upon the liberties of the subject, Finally, the bold innovation of septennial, for triennial parliaments, has not been found to produce the salutary effects mentioned in the preamble of the statute, passed in the first year of the reign of king George I. but has certainly tended to relax the tie, and set at a wider interval the connection between constituent and representative, so that the same is hardly felt and acknowledged.

1810

"These are the chief grounds and causes of the unhappy difference in opinion and feeling, that prevail between your honorable house and the people.

"Your petitioners, therefore, most earnestly pray of your honorable house, that you will take into your timely and serious consideration, the present state of the representation, and will adopt such measures of reform as may be sufficient to restore to the house, the confidence of the people, which is its true dignity, and to make your honorable house, in practice and effect, what it is constitutionally, the organ of the sense of its constituents.

" And your petitioners shall ever pray."

Such was the general language of the people at this period, grounded on the conduct of the house, and the speeches of the ministers, which seemed to afford too much reason for such remarks to the mass of the people; but these sentiments were not adopted by all, and in consequence, about seventy of the principal inhabitants, including the mayor, and the greater part of the corporate body, conceived it incumbent on them to publish the following declaration of their sentiments:

" Reading, May 17, 1810.

"We, the undersigned, inhabitants of the borough of Reading, having seen in public advertisement, the resolutions and petitions to parliament, agreed upon at a meeting holden at the town hall, on Monday the 7th instant, and being unwilling that they should go forth as containing the unanimous sentiments of the borough, think it necessary to declare as follows:

"That, we view with sincere regret the attempts industriously made to vilify and degrade, in the opinion of the country, the commons' house of par-

CHAP. liament, that most important part of the legislature, which the wisest and ablest men have considered and declared to be, the safeguard and protection of the liberty of these kingdoms, against the encroachments of power on the one hand, and the excess of popular violence on the other.

1810

"That, the confidence in the wisdom of parliament, and resolution to support its privilege, which we are bound, as friends to the constitution, to afford them at all times, were never more imperiously required, than at the present eventful period, when the throne of our venerable king, and our very existence as a nation, are threatened by the most implacable and powerful enemy to whom our country has ever been opposed.

"That, we therefore strongly disapprove the petition to the house of commons, for the release of John Gale Jones and sir Francis Burdett, being of opinion that there is no small degree of presumption, in attempting to dictate to that honorable house, the conduct it ought to pursue towards those persons; and also, that questions of so great import, affecting the honor, the independence, and the very existence of parliament, should be left for decision to those tribunals, in which, by the constitution, they are ultimately vested.

"That, we also fully rely on the wisdom and patriotism of the house of commons, to originate and carry into effect such measures, as may conduce to remove all such imperfections as the lapse of time may have produced; but we cannot think that this end is likely to be effected, by such expressions of direct or implied reproach, as we find in the petitions-expressions, which, on many accounts, meet our decided disapprobation.

"That, we disapprove the revival of such questions, as that relating to the policy and conduct of the late expedition to Walcheren, however we may regret the termination of that affair; yet, as it has undergone a laborious inquiry, and received a solemn decision, by the proper constitutional authority, it can only be productive of renewed irritation in the public mind, by being brought into further discussion. On the whole, we feel it our duty to declare, that as we admire the excellent frame of government under which we live, and are grateful for the blessings we enjoy, we cannot consent to be considered as uniting in measures, which we think calculated only to promote discontent and disaffection. Independent, however, of all party, and zealous for the public good, we can never cease to implore the divine Providence, for the permanence of our happy constitution, which we are determined to support, in all its branches, against every attempt to injure and degrade it, from whatever quarter it may proceed."

1812

In consequence of the atrocious assassination of Mr. Percival, the late chancellor of the exchequer, in the lobby of the house of commons, which













READING TOKENS, ISSUED BY I.B. MONCE, ESQ.



filled every friend to his country with horror and detestation, the following CHAP. address was drawn up, and signed by most of the principal inhabitants of the borough, and afterwards presented to the prince regent:

" To his royal highness the prince of Wales, regent of the united kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland:

1812

- " The humble and dutiful address and condolence, of the mayor, aldermen, burgesses, and other inhabitants of the borough of Reading, in the county of Berks.
  - " May it please your royal Highness,
- "We, his majesty's most dutiful and loyal subjects, the mayor, aldermen, burgesses, and other inhabitants of the borough of Reading, humbly beg leave to offer to your royal highness the assurance of our loyalty and attachment to your person and government, and of our firm and devoted reverence and affection to the laws and constitution of our country.
- "We feel most sensibly the outrage which has been committed against these laws, in the recent assassination of the right honorable Spencer Percival, first lord commissioner of the treasury, and chancellor of the exchequer. We lament the foul stain which has been thrown on the national character of England by this atrocious act, and cannot sufficiently express our detestation and abhorrence of the horrid, and almost unprecedented crime, and of the person who committed it. More particularly we deplore and regret, the great and heavy loss which your royal highness's council, and the nation, have sustained, at this critical period, in the death of a most able, virtuous, and uncorrupt minister; whose probity and integrity, whose many public and private virtues, are acknowledged, even by those who differed from him in political opinions, and whose name and character will be transmitted in the fairest colors to succeeding ages.
- " We earnestly implore the protection of that gracious Providence, which has hitherto delivered us from the common ruin, which has so rapidly overwhelmed the nations of the Continent; and we indulge the pleasing hope, that under the auspicious council and direction of your royal highness, the united kingdom may still be preserved free and inviolate, and may, under the divine favor, ultimately prove the means of restoring the oppressed nations of Europe to liberty and peace."

The inhabitants of the town being much distressed this year, by the want of a circulating medium, owing to the war on the Continent, and the constant drain of the specie for the payment of our forces in Spain, J. Berkley Monck, esq. of Coley-house, issued gold and silver tokens to a large amount, which CHAP. VI.

were a great relief to the trading part of the community. Impressions of the several pieces are given in plate 5.

While the renewal of the East India charter was agitating, in the house of commons this year, several members of the different religious persuasions in this town, wishing to encourage the promotion of the christian religion in that vast empire, by means of missionaries, held a meeting in the town-hall, when Mr. Tanner being called to the chair, the following resolutions were passed:

" 1st, That the petition to the two houses, now read, be adopted.

"2nd, That the right honorable lord Braybrook be requested to present the petition to the house of lords, and to support the same.

"3d, That the petition to the house of commons be presented by the members for this borough, and that they be requested to support the same."

The petition was as follows:

"To the right honorable the lords spiritual and temporal, in parliament assembled.

"The humble petition of the undersigned inhabitants of Reading and its vicinity, sheweth—

"That your petitioners most cordially approve of the important and enlightened sentiments contained in the resolution formed by the honorable house of commons, in the year 1793. That it is the peculiar and bounden duty of the British legislature to promote, by all just and prudent means, the interests and happiness of the inhabitants of the British dominions in India; and that for these ends, such measures ought to be adopted, as may gradually tend to their advancement in useful knowledge, and to their religious and moral improvement."

"Your petitioners, however, deeply lament, that so little has hitherto been done, to carry those humane and christian principles into effect, notwithstanding the awful state of ignorance, superstition, and gross idolatry, in which that immense population has so long remained.

"Your petitioners, therefore, earnestly implore your lordships, that such arrangements may be made, as shall afford the utmost facilities to those benevolent persons, as may be desirous of going to India, for the purpose of communicating the useful knowledge, and the blessings of the christian religion; and also, such provisions be made, as may prevent any future obstruction of their endeavors to forward these great designs in that country, so long as the persons thus engaged, shall conduct themselves in a peaceable and orderly manner. And your petitioners shall ever pray, &c."

This was the last public act of the inhabitants of this ancient borough, whose historic records we have endeavored to trace from the earliest ages

of our history to the present time. A period, during which, notwithstanding the inhabitants have experienced many reverses, and misfortunes, the town has gradually advanced to its present state of improvement, both in the number and elegance of its buildings, and the increase of its trade, which is daily extending itself through the most distant parts of the kingdom, by means of the various rivers and canals connected with the Thames and Kennet; the latter of which passes through the heart of the town, and the former flows at a very short distance from it.

VI.

### THE

## HISTORY AND ANTIQUITIES

OF

### READING.

# Town of Reading.

CHAPTER VII.

CHAP. VII. HE town of Reading is situated nearly in the centre of the county of Berks, on the borders of Oxfordshire, from which it is separated by the river Thames, which forms its northern boundary: On the east it is bounded by the parish of Sonning: on the south by the hamlets of Whitley and Southcot: and on the west by the parish of Tilehurst. Its latitude is 51° 25' N. and its longitude 1° 0' W. being nearly four minutes later in time than London. Authors differ so much in the etymology of its name, that it is become very difficult, from that alone, to determine, who were its original founders. Camden supposes it to have been of British original; and Leland, by a forced construction of the distances set down in Antoninus's Itinerary, conjectures that the Romans had a station here called Pontes, but that its present name was derived from the Saxons. The reverend Henry Beeke, D. D. F. A. S. in a paper published in the Archælogia, for 1807, from the Roman Itinerary of Richard of Cirencester, asserts, that Reading was the ancient Caleva of the Romans, from which name he derives the manor of Coley, near Reading. Conjectures so very wide of each other, require some elucidation. lowing disquisition therefore, if not entirely satisfactory, may at least furnish a plausible solution of the difficulty:

The opinion, that the name was adopted from the British word redin, signifying fern, was, I believe, first started by Camden, in his Britannia, who has been followed by most writers since his time, for no other reason that I can conceive than the similarity of sound in the two words, which must be allowed too vague to found any reasonable conjecture upon. It is certainly true, that fern does grow in the neighborhood of the town, but not in such profusion as to entitle it to the exclusive privilege of giving it its name. There are very few places in England where this plant is not to be found, and therefore so common an occurrence cannot, I conceive, be admitted, as a decisive proof, unsupported by other evidences, either of its name or origin.

Julius Cæsar, who wrote his Commentaries about fifty years prior to the birth of Christ, who was the first of the Romans that invaded this country, and has left us the best authenticated account of the manners of the ancient Britons, makes a distinction between the inhabitants of the coasts, and those of the interior. The houses of the former, he says, were thickly scattered about the sea side; but makes no mention of any in the interior. What the inhabitants called towns, were only thick woods surrounded by deep ditches, whither they occasionally retired to avoid the incursions of an enemy.\* The nearer we trace mankind to a state of nature, the more we shall be convinced, that many refinements must be made, and wants created, before they can be induced to form themselves into fixed societies. In the earliest ages of the world, all mankind appear to have been herdsmen, and such were most probably the original inhabitants of this island, who, as Casar informs us, for the most part, sowed no corn, but lived chiefly on flesh and milkt, a mode of living better adapted to the roving nature of savage life, than to the inhabitants of regular towns. We may, therefore, conclude, that, at the period above mentioned, the inhabitants of the interior were not so far civilized, as to have built towns; and consequently that this place could not be indebted for its origin to them, prior to the invasion of the Romans; and, from the state of vassalage they were afterwards held in by their conquerors, there is little reason to suppose they formed any settlement here during their government.

The wars carried on between the aborigines and the Romans, during so many years, and the number of recruits from the natives annually sent to the Continent, to fill up the vacancies in the Roman legions, must, under their government, have greatly reduced their numbers, and rendered many parts

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<sup>\*</sup> Oppidum autem Britanni vocant, quum sylvas impeditas vallo atque fossâ munierunt, quo, incursiones hostium vitandæ causâ convenire consueverint.

<sup>†</sup> Interiores plerique frumenta non serunt, sed lacte et carne vivunt. — Casar's Commentaries.

CHAP, of the country a desert; many fled to the mountainous parts for safety, and those who submitted, were generally incorporated with their conquerors, in their military stations, or fixed their habitations as near to them as possible, for the sake of affording reciprocal assistance. Now, as no such place is mentioned by any of the Roman writers, we may, I think, fairly conclude, that the origin of Reading must have been subsequent to their departure in the fifth century.

The number of bridges in this town, seems to have suggested to Leland, the idea, that the place called Pontes (Bridges) in the Itinerary, was Reading;\* this notion he endeavors to support, by supposing the number of miles, set down in that work, between London and Marlborough, to be incorrect; but consequences formed from conjecture only, cannot be admitted as sufficient evidences of truth. Had the Romans made a settlement here, some remains of their buildings or coins, + would, at some time or other, have been discovered; but as nothing of the kind has happened, nor any notice taken of such a place, by their historians, it is evident we must look to another race of people for the founders of Reading.

These I conceive to have been the Saxons, who soon after the departure of the former conquerors of this country, were called in, by the effeminate natives, to defend them against the attacks of their more ferocious enemies, in the northern parts of the island.

It was customary with the Saxons to give names to their towns, and villages, from some peculiar circumstance attending the spot, on which they were built; as Windsor, in Saxon, Windle-shoran, a winding shore; so we find Reading compounded of two Saxon words, rhe a river, and ing a meadow, exactly answering to its situation on the banks of the Kennet, and surrounded by meadows. And, although Leland supposes that this town existed in the time of the Romans, yet he acknowledges that it derived its present name

<sup>\*</sup> Pontes, numero plurali, &c. Pontes, in the plural number, is, as I conjecture, the town which the Saxons called Radige, and Radyng, for thus I find it written in very ancient writings. Antoninus makes mention of Pontes. Although the number of miles, expressed in the Itinerary, between Pontes and London, does not agree with the distance of Radyng from London; yet I have learned from experience, that the numerals in Antoninus are incorrect. Besides the town of Alaunodunum, now called Maidenhead, and Uxinum pontem and Colunum, in Saxon Columbroke, by corruption Colebroke, are of a more recent date, and therefore cannot refer to the ancient Pontes. And in that place he only mentions cities and towns of note, of which, except Radyng, there are none between Cunetione alias Marlebyri and London.—Leland's Cygnea Cantio.

<sup>+</sup> Herne, in his preface to Leland's Collectanea, mentions some Roman coins found at Reading, but adds ut fertur, therefore no stress can be laid on his assertion. "Et hic Radingi Bercheriensi repertus erat, una cum aliis, ut fertur."

from the Saxons. Radynge, he says, " in my opinion, took its name, among CHAP. the Saxons, from the conflux of the two rivers. There is another place of this name on the banks of the river Limen alias Rother, which divides Kent from Surrey. The river that intersects the town of Reading, was called by the Romans Cunetio, and by the Saxons Kennet. It rises in Wiltshire, at the bottom of a small hill, formerly thrown up for warlike purposes, called Selburg. From thence passing by Cunetionem (Marlborough) a celebrated town of that name; Speen, alias Neocuria, and Radynge, it falls into the Thames confluence of the two rivers contributes somewhat to the etymology of its name, as does Cunetio, which passes through this ancient town. pleasant village of Bere, it divides into two streams, the larger of which passes under the bridge on the south side of Radynge, the smaller one, called the Holy-brook, flows on the northern part of the town; after which the two streams unite in one channel. In their passage through the town, they form several pleasant islands. Lastly, and which is an additional proof of the correctness of this derivation, the Saxons call a brook or river rhe, and sometimes Hrie, from whence come Rhegate, that is the course of the river; Overrhe, beyond the river; Rheford, the ford of the river; Rhidune, a town near a river; Suderhe, on the south side the river; and from hence comes the name of the county on the south side the Thames, Surrey." So far Leland. And although his description of the Kennet is not quite correct, particularly where he states it to branch off at Bere Court, which it certainly does not; yet he clearly proves, that the name of the town is of Saxon derivation; and if so, it is most probable that our Saxon ancestors were the real founders of the town.

As a further proof, it may be observed, that the names of all the villages in its neighborhood, except Sylchester, at the distance of ten miles from Reading, which is acknowledged to be a Roman military station, are of Saxon derivation. Thus, from feld, a field; as Arborfield, Binfield, Burghfield, Heckfield, Swallowfield, Stratfield, Warfield, Shinfield, Winkfield, and Englefield. From ham, home; as Beenham, Caversham, Barkham, Mapledurham, Sulham, Wokingham, and Waltham. From hyrst, a wood; as Hurst, Tilehurst, and Sandhurst. From leah, a pasture; as Langley, Henley, Whitley, Coley, and Hartley. From cote, a cot; as Woodcot, Southcot, Northcot, and Calcot. From staed, a bank; as Ashamsted, Berkhamsted, Sulhamsted, Finchamsted, and Hampsted. And many others ending in bourne, by the side of a river; as Pangbourn: in grave, the place of interment; as Wargrave, &c.

In addition to these observations, it may be noticed, that Asserius Mene-

vensis,\* who flourished in the reign of Alfred, was the first writer that mentions Reading,† and that consequently it could not have existed long, prior to the ninth century.

Should this conjecture be allowed, it may be necessary to examine, at what period its foundation took place? And here we shall find less difficulty; for though historians have been silent on this head, there are other circumstances from which we may deduce a warrantable conclusion on the subject.

Cerdic, the first of the Saxon monarchs, who conquered a part of Wessex, did not land on the Sussex coast till the year 495, and it was nearly fifty years from this period before his successors penetrated to the Thames, and as it cannot be supposed, that during the wars that attended their conquests, they could have formed lasting settlements, we may infer that this town could not have been founded prior to the seventh century. At which period I am the more inclined to fix it, as it seems to have risen to some eminence prior to its being seized by the Danes in the middle of the ninth century, which could not have been the case had it taken place at a later period.

After the destruction of the town by the Danes, it was a long while before it recovered its former consequence, for even so late as the Norman conquest, the number of houses was very small, and even those few were in a dilapidated state, as appears from the following extracts from Doomsday book:

"Rex tenet in dominio Radinges. Rex Edwardus tenuit in Radinges Hundred. Tunc et modo defendit se pro xliii hidis terræ, est xl carucarum. In dominio est una et lv villi et xxx bordarii cum lv caragiis. Ibi sunt iiii molini de xxxv solidis, et tres piscariæ de xiii solidis et sex denariis, et cl acræ prati. Silva de centum porcis. De pastura xvi solidis et vi denariis. Tempore Regis Edwardi et post valebat xl libris, modo xlviii libris. Rex habet in Burgo Radinges xxviii hagas reddentes iiii libras et iiii solidos pro omnibus consuctudinibus. Tamen qui tenet, reddit c solidos. Henricus de Ferreres habet ibi unam hagam, et dimidium virgatæ terræ in qua sunt quatuor acræ prati, valentes sex solidis. Godric vicecomes tenuit hanc terram ad hospitium, eodem Henricus tenet.

"Reinbaldus filius Petri episcopi tenuit unam hagam ibi quam trahebat ad Erlei manorium suum, modo est in manu regis et valet xvi denariis."

"The king holds Reading in demesne. King Edward held in the hun-

<sup>\*</sup> Readingi, primus quod ego sciam, Asserius Menevensis, illustrem in annalibus suis mentionem facit.—Leland.

<sup>+</sup> The orthography of this name has been frequently changed; at first it was Rheadynge, then Radynge, Reddin, and lastly Reading, according to the present manner of expressing it, which took place about the beginning of the seventeenth century.

dred of Reading. Then and now it defended itself for fifty three hides of CHAP. land.\* There are forty carrucates. There are in demesne fifty five slaves and thirty cottagers with fifty five ploughs. There are four mills of thirtyfive shillings value, and three fisheries of thirteen shillings and six-pence, and one hundred and fifty acres of meadow. A wood for one hundred hogs. In pasture to the value of sixteen shillings and six pence. In the time of king Edward, and since it was worth forty pounds, now forty eight pounds."

Thus far this extract from Doomsday Book seems wholly to refer to the hundred of Reading; what follows belongs to the town:

"The king has within the borough of Reading twenty-eight houses, yielding four pounds four shillings annually for all customs. Nevertheless, he that farms them pays one hundred shillings. Henry de Ferrers has there one house and half a virgate+ (fifteen acres of land,) amongst which are four acres of meadow, worth six shillings. Earl Goderic held this land for hospitality, for which purpose it is now held by Henry.

"Reinbaldus the son of Peter the bishop, held one house there, which he has annexed to his manor of Erley; now it belongs to the king, and is worth sixteen pence per annum."

In this description of the town, it is evident that only the king's demesne is mentioned, except in one instance, which was appropriated to charitable purposes. What other houses there were, cannot now be determined; but that there were more, is clear from the subsequent account, in the same book, of the possessions in this town belonging to the abbey of Battel.

"Ipse Abbot (de la Batailge) tenet in Redinge ecclesiam, t cum viir hidis ibi pertinentibus. Leveva Abatissa tenuit de Rege Edwardi. Tunc defendebat se pro viii, modo pro vii hidis terræ, et vii caragiis. In dominio est, una et ix villi, et viii bordarii, cum v carragiis. Ibi sunt duo molini & de XL solidis, et duo piscariæ et dimidium, de quinque solidis. In Radinges sunt XXIX masuræ de XXVIII solidis et VIII denariis, et XII acræ prati. Sylva de v porcis. De ecclesia III libris. Tempore Regis Edwardi valebat IX libris, et post viii libris, modo xi libris."

<sup>\*</sup> The hide is a Saxon term, and means 100 acres of stiff land, or 120 of light land, the quantity one plough was supposed to work in a year. The carrucate was a Norman term, signifying the same quantity.

<sup>+</sup> A virgate, or yard of land, was thirty acres. This was, no doubt, St. Mary's, being the oldest church in the town.

It is very doubtful what kind of mills these were; but it is probable they were only handmills, as wind, and water mills must have been of a later date.

"The abbot of Battel holds in Reading a church with eight hides of land belonging to it; Leveva the abbess held it of king Edward. At that time it defended itself for eight, now for three hides of land, and seven ploughs. There are two mills of forty shillings, and two fisheries and a half of five shillings. In Reading are twenty-nine houses in ruins, worth twenty-eight shillings and eight pence, and twelve acres of meadow. A wood sufficient to feed five hogs.\* The church is worth three pounds. In the time of king Edward it was worth nine pounds, afterwards eight pounds, but now eleven pounds."

It is probable, from this extract, that the Conqueror endowed his newly erected monastery called Battel† Abbey, with the remaining possessions of the lately destroyed numery here, including the church, consisting of three hides or 360 acres, which, nearly corresponding with the extent of Battel†-farm, I conceive the land here described must have been the same, and probably received its present name from this circumstance; though some imagine it took its rise in the civil wars, in the reign of Charles I.

The present buildings are in general large and built with brick, intermixed with a few lath and plaster ones, the remains of the sixteenth century. These are in general low and ill-constructed, and were probably originally covered with thatch.‡ They are easily distinguished by the gable ends being turned towards the street, for the convenience of receiving lights in the attics; a mode of building universally adopted prior to the introduction of dormer windows.

It appears from Speed's map of the town, published in 1610, that although

\* Acoms were thought of so much consequence, by the Saxons, for fattening hogs, that an express law was made, by Ina, king of the West Saxons, for the preservation of the oaks on which they grew, and the regulations of the pay, for each fat hog to the proprietor of the wood; by which it was decreed, that "a man, on conviction, for having felled a tree, whose branches would have given shelter to thirty hogs, should be fined six hundred shillings; and if a person received hogs into his woods to fatten, if the fat was three fingers thick, he was to have every third hog; if two fingers thick, every fourth; and, if one finger thick, every fifth.—Sammes' Britannia.

+ So spelt originally.

‡ Forasmuch as there are divers hovels, and thatched houses, builded within this borough, which are verie daungerous if casualtie of fire should happen, neare to anie of them, which God forbidde: Therefore it is ordeyned, by the assent of the whole companie present, that all such persons, as have builded any hovell, or buildynge, in any place within this boroughe which shall bee thought by the maior and burgesses to be inconvenient, shall forthwithe take awaye all the thatch from suche hovells or buildynges, and that no person or persons from henceforthe, shall erect or builde, any hovells or buildynge within the precincts of this boroughe, except the same shall bee covered with tiles, without the special license of the maior and burgesses, upon paine, that everie person which shall doe the contrarie, shall, for everie such hovell or buildynge forfeite fortie shillings."—Corporation Diary.





the streets covered the same space of ground as at present, the houses were not so numerous. Vastern-lane, Boarded-lane, Pigney-lane, Kate's-grove-lane, Church-street, East-street, with great part of West-street, Seven-bridges, Horn-street, Southampton-street, and Cross-street, besides most of the courts and entries were then only partially built on.

CHAP. VII.

In the abstract of the population act, the number of births, burials, and marriages, within the three parishes, during the last century, is given in the following table:

|   | Yrs. | H      | Baptism  | ıs.    |        | Burial   | s.     | Marri  | ages. | Marri  | ages. |
|---|------|--------|----------|--------|--------|----------|--------|--------|-------|--------|-------|
|   |      | Males. | Females. | Total. | Males. | Females. | Total. | Years. | No.   | Years. | No.   |
|   | 1700 | 107    | 99       | 206    | 80     | 81       | 161    | 1754   | 54    | 1783   | 71    |
|   | 1710 | 84     | 89       | 173    | 114    | 132      | 246    | 1755   | 58    | 1784   | 74    |
|   | 1720 | 125    | 110      | 235    | 114    | 87       | 201    | 1756   | 57    | 1785   | 76    |
|   | 1730 | 119    | 96       | 215    | 118    | 128      | 246    | 1757   | 70    | 1786   | 75    |
|   | 1740 | 109    | 108      | 217    | 138    | 111      | 249    | 1758   | 81    | 1787   | 75    |
|   | 1750 | 130    | 108      | 238    | 89     | 106      | 195    | 1759   | 55    | 1788   | 78    |
|   | 1760 | 95     | 105      | 200    | 106    | 124      | 230    | 1760   | 66    | 1789   | 81    |
|   | 1770 | 124    | 121      | 245    | 101    | 92       | 193    | 1761   | 67    | 1790   | 84    |
|   | 1780 | 127    | 136      | 263    | 143    | 116      | 259    | 1762   | 70    | 1791   | 77    |
| i | 1781 | 142    | 110      | 252    | 120    | 93       | 213    | 1763   | 70    | 1792   | 90    |
|   | 1782 | 120    | 117      | 237    | 117    | 121      | 238    | 1764   | 66    | 1793   | 72    |
|   | 1783 | 125    | 122      | 247    | 149    | 129      | 278    | 1765   | 70    | 1794   | 65    |
| 3 | 1784 | 125    | 130      | 255    | 101    | 126      | 227    | 1766   | 44    | 1795   | 82    |
| 1 | 1785 | 132    | 142      | 274    | 118    | 149      | 267    | 1767   | 51    | 1796   | 72    |
| j | 1786 | 153    | 116      | 269    | 110    | 88       | 198    | 1768   | 53    | 1797   | 84    |
| - | 1787 | 164    | 126      | 290    | 125    | 106      | 231    | 1769   | 73    | 1798   | 60    |
| ł | 1788 | 135    | 119      | 254    | 192    | 145      | 337    | 1770   | 66    | 1799   | 86    |
|   | 1789 | 133    | 146      | 279    | 118    | 111      | 229    | 1771   | 80    | 1800   | 81    |
| ı | 1790 | 150    | 139      | 289    | 97     | 102      | 199    | 1772   | 64    | ·      |       |
| ı | 1791 | 124    | 146      | 270    | 143    | 153      | 296    | 1773   | 40    |        |       |
|   | 1792 | 149    | 135      | 284    | 107    | 120      | 227    | 1774   | 56    |        |       |
| 1 | 1793 | 151    | 134      | 285    | 169    | 158      | 327    | 1775   | 81    |        |       |
| 1 | 1794 | 106    | 135      | 241    | 137    | 129      | 266    | 1776   | 71    |        |       |
| Ì | 1795 | 154    | 132      | 286    | 140    | 147      | 287    | 1777   | 77    |        |       |
|   | 1796 | 113    | 131      | 244    | 109    | 86       | 195    | 1778   | 78    |        |       |
| 1 | 1797 | 119    | 146      | 265    | 104    | 113      | 217    | 1779   | 84    |        |       |
|   | 1798 | 144    | 116      | 260    | 180    | 195      | 375    | 1780   | 93    |        |       |
|   | 1799 | 133    | 136      | 258    | 98     | 108      | 206    | 1781   | 66    |        |       |
|   | 1800 | 128    | 114      | 242    | 131    | 149      | 280    | 1782   | 76    |        |       |

CHAP.

In the census taken in 1810, the number of baptisms, burials, and marriages, for the last ten years, was as follows:

| Yrs.                                                                         | В                                              | aptism                                                             | s.                                                                           | 1                                              | Mar.                                                               |                                                                              |                                                               |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------|
| 1801<br>1802<br>1803<br>1804<br>1805<br>1806<br>1807<br>1808<br>1809<br>1810 | Malcs. 133 140 137 146 140 151 146 139 142 151 | 123<br>121<br>149<br>124<br>129<br>158<br>133<br>131<br>134<br>139 | 70tal.<br>256<br>261<br>286<br>270<br>269<br>309<br>279<br>270<br>276<br>290 | Males. 105 137 131 106 100 141 105 131 126 137 | 105<br>142<br>126<br>105<br>107<br>129<br>124<br>129<br>125<br>125 | 70tal.<br>210<br>279<br>257<br>211<br>207<br>270<br>229<br>260<br>251<br>262 | 83<br>97<br>111<br>96<br>95<br>110<br>101<br>107<br>99<br>111 |

From the daily increase of dissenters of all denominations from the established church, many of whom baptize the members of their own community, without having them registered by the ministers of the several parishes, it is evident, that the above list of births cannot be relied on, in forming a calculation of the number of inhabitants at distant periods in the town, without making an allowance for this deficiency. If, therefore, we add one third to the number of births, in each year, we shall probably come pretty near the truth.

"Dr. Halley found, from the state of the population of Breslaw, in 1690, that 34000 inhabitants produced, on an average, every year, 1238 births, being in the proportion of  $27\frac{1}{2}$  to one; but other writers, particularly Messance, in his Recherches sur la Population des generalités d'Auvergne, de Lyon, &c. have discovered, that taking the average from towns of the second order, such as Rouen, &c. it will be found to be as 28 to 1."

Taking therefore this *datum* of 28 inhabitants to one birth, and allowing one third in addition to the number of births, in the foregoing table, the number of births at the several periods, will be nearly as in the following table:

A table, shewing the population of Reading, every tenth year, from 1700 to 1810.

| Years. | Population. | Years. | Population. | Years. | Population. | Years. | Population. |
|--------|-------------|--------|-------------|--------|-------------|--------|-------------|
| 1700   | 7690        | 1730   | 8027        | 1760   | 7467        | 1790   | 10789       |
| 1710   | 6459        | 1740   | 8101        | 1770   | 9147        | 1800   | 9035        |
| 1720   | 8773        | 1750   | 8885        | 1780   | 9819        | 1810   | 10827       |

<sup>2</sup> Recreations in Mathematics.

The above numbers are, I believe, nearly correct, though they may sometimes appear irregular, owing to the number of births in one year being less than in the preceding one; whenever that is the case, it will be generally found to be made up in the succeeding one, as in 1760, when the population appears to have decreased, but this deficiency is made up in 1770; therefore taking the average of these years, the result will shew a gradual increase.

CHAP. VII.

The following are the returns made by order of the house of commons, in 1800 and 1810, stating the number of houses and of the inhabitants under their respective classes:

Return of the Population for 1800.

|                                                         | Inhabited<br>Houses. | Families.              | Uninha-<br>bited<br>Houses. | Males.                     | Females.                   | Families<br>Employed in<br>Agriculture | In Trade.              | Others.              | Total.               |
|---------------------------------------------------------|----------------------|------------------------|-----------------------------|----------------------------|----------------------------|----------------------------------------|------------------------|----------------------|----------------------|
| St. Mary.<br>St. Lawrence.<br>St. Giles.<br>*Whitley H. | 651                  | 660<br>706<br>769<br>4 | 9<br>13<br>10               | 1576<br>1468<br>1598<br>13 | 1580<br>1702<br>1818<br>15 | 119<br>22<br>300<br>27                 | 770<br>885<br>841<br>1 | 2267<br>2263<br>2275 | 3156<br>3170<br>3416 |
|                                                         | 1755                 | 2139                   | 32                          | 4655                       | 5115                       | 468                                    | 2497                   | 6805                 | 9742                 |

## Return of the Population for 1810.

|                           | Inhabited<br>Houses, | Families.  | Uninha-<br>bited<br>Houses | Males.       | Females.          | Families<br>Employed in<br>Agriculture | In Trade.  | Others.         | Total.              |
|---------------------------|----------------------|------------|----------------------------|--------------|-------------------|----------------------------------------|------------|-----------------|---------------------|
| St. Mary.<br>St. Giles.   | 662<br>672           | 754<br>760 | 6 15                       | 1617<br>1587 | 1884<br>2040      | 49                                     | 538<br>629 | 167<br>117      | 3501<br>3627        |
| St. Lawrence. Whitley Ham | 611<br>49<br>6       | 767<br>51  | 8 3                        | 1686         | 1974<br>126<br>22 | 91<br>41<br>2                          | 428 7 2    | 248             | 3660                |
| Southcot H.               | 5000                 | 2339       | 32                         | 23<br>5047   | 6046              | 197                                    | 1604       | $\frac{3}{538}$ | $\frac{45}{11,093}$ |

Population in 1800 9742

Increase 1351

The increase in the number of the inhabitants within the last ten years, according to the above returns, is by much too large. For taking the average annual increase, during the last century, according to the above table of the population, for every tenth year, we shall find it to be 30; which for the last ten years would give an increase of 300 only instead of 1351.

But this difference may be accounted for, by the incorrect manner in

<sup>\*</sup> No notice is taken in the population abstract, published by order of the house of commons, of the hamlet of Southcot.

which the census was at first taken, owing to its being a new measure, and to the jealousy of some of the inhabitants, who suspected it was intended to lead to some new system of taxation, and therefore diminished the real numbers in their returns. But, from its being at length better understood, and more caution having been taken in collecting the last returns, it is probable that those are the most correct, and that the number of inhabitants exceeds, as there stated, eleven thousand.

According to an account taken by order of Cardinal Pole, in 1555, the number of inhabitants of all descriptions in the town was only 2500, being in St. Mary's parish 500, in St. Lawrence's 850, and in St. Giles's 500 \* But these being all round numbers, I am inclined to think no great strength can be laid on their correctness, especially as the aggregate amount of the three parishes, as here stated, is considerably under 2500, the number of the inhabitants given before, and that the real number of the inhabitants, at that time, was nearer 4000; for I find, in 1600, the number of births was 168, which, multiplied by 28, (the number of dissenters being at that time very inconsiderable) will give a population of 4704, which is nearer the truth, and corresponds nearly in proportion with the foregoing table for every tenth year.

It is evident, therefore, that the town has, for the last two or three centuries, gone on gradually increasing, and, from the number of new buildings in every street and avenue in the town, there is reason to believe it is still in a progressive state of improvement, both in its extent and in the number of its population.

The site of the town is nearly in the form of an equilateral triangle, of which Friar-street, on the north, may be considered the base. The eastern side is formed by the Market-place, High-street, Duke-street, London-street, and Sievier-street; and the western, by West-street, the Butts, Seven Bridges, Horn-street, and Southampton-street; each of these sides have streets branching from them at right angles, as New-street on the east, and Castle-street on the west, with other smaller streets, leading to different parts of the town, covering in the whole a space of about three miles and a half in circumference, but the whole extent of the borough exceeds nine miles in circumference.

Beyond the limits of the borough, are the hamlets of Whitley, and Southcot; the former attached to the parish of St. Giles, the latter to that of St. Mary. The inhabitants of these hamlets are not entitled to vote for the members for the town, though they are assessed to both the church and poor's rates of their respective parishes. An attempt was lately made by the hamlet of Whitley, to obtain a separation from the parish, but without effect; and they continue, as before, a constituted part of the parish, with particular rights, exemptions, and separate interests.

<sup>\*</sup> Lyson's, from the Bodleian Library.

In the year 1785, an act passed for the better paving, lighting, and watch- CHAP. ing the town, under the superintendance of certain of the inhabitants, who are therein named commissioners, with power to levy a rate of six-pence in the pound on all houses under twenty pounds per annum, encreasing to one shilling in the pound for larger houses, which is the highest rate that can be levied. Under the powers granted by this act, the town has been much improved; the streets are well paved and clean, the fronts of the houses better arranged, and every part well lit, by lamps suspended in front of the houses, from Michaelmas to Lady-day.\* This is not only a great convenience to the inhabitants, who may have occasion to be out in dark evenings, but is also in a great measure a preventative to the commission of crimes and robberies.

These improvements were at first carried on by means of a voluntary loan without interest, which has since been repaid by yearly instalments, and of two annuities of forty pounds a year each, for lives granted to individuals: these being still payable, have hitherto prevented the town from receiving all the benefit it otherwise would, both in paving and watching, according to the powers granted by the act for those purposes.

The old town-hall thaving been found very incommodious for the purposes for which it was appropriated, was taken down in 1786, and the present elegant room erected over the free school, under the superintendance of Mr. alderman Poulton. Adjoining the town-hall is the council-chamber; a large handsome room, in which the members of the corporation hold their courts,

\* Among the luxuries and comforts of the present age, this of lighting the streets by means of lamps, is not the least. It is uncertain when they were first introduced in this town, but it must have been posterior to 1656, when we find the following entry in the Corporation Diary. "Upon the petition of Richard Reddatt, bellman; agreed, that he be allowed ten shillings for his pains, in warning the inhabitants, to hang out lanthorns and candles in the dark nights."

In like manner, in 1466, "the lord mayor of London ordained lanthorns with lights to be hanged out in the winter from hallontide to candlemass."-Stowe.

+ On a stone tablet, fixed in the wall of the old town-hall, was the following inscription:

Auspiciis Caroli 2di Regis. Curiam hanc laBantem refeci Augeri et ornari Curaverunt Sumptu puBlico Prætor et Decuriones hujus Municipii Liberali ope Johis Blagrave Armigeri non parum adjuti.

It appears, from this inscription, that the hall was at that time repaired at the public expence; but whether this was done by a subscription among the inhabitants, or by any other means, is uncertain; but there can be no doubt it ought, as in a recent instance, to have been at the expence of the corporation.



and transact all the private affairs of the community; and here the grand jury assemble, both at the assizes and quarter-sessions. In this room are preserved the portraits of some of the principal benefactors to this town, as sir Thomas White, queen Elizabeth, Mr. John Kenrick, and archbishop Laud. The lent assizes for the county are always\* held here in the town-hall, which is fitted up, with convenient courts at each end, for the purpose; and here also the quarter-sessions for the county are held twice in the year.

The borough, being by its charter a county within itself, all offences committed within its limits, except capital ones, are determined at the town sessions, which are held four times in the year, at which the mayor, or his *locum tenens*, assisted by the recorder, presides.

The mayor also holds a court of record every Wednesday, for hearing and determining such complaints among the inhabitants, as are not of consequence to be decided at the quarter sessions.

When the town sessions are held, the jurymen are selected from among the inhabitants; but they are exempt from serving on the jury, either at the assizes, or quarter sessions for the county, even if held in the town; neither do they pay gaol money or county rates.

Even so far back as the reign of Henry III. this town was considered to be distinct from the county, "for it was then judged upon computation that xvL in Gaynz and xIs. in the foreign hundred of Reading ought not to be allowed the sheriff of Berkshire, because he had without them, enough in assised lands to make up the full sum of the body of the county, with vs. over and above."

At the commencement of the last century, a person that had been robbed in Southcot-lane, between sun and sun, sued the hundred for damages, and having obtained a verdict, the sheriff of Berks assessed the borough for their share of the damages, in common with the other parts of the hundred:

\* Mr. Coates thinks, from a passage in one of lord Clarendon's letters to the lord treasurer, dated in 1689, thanking him "for getting the assizes to be kept at Abingdon," that both the assizes, prior to this time, were held at Reading, but several instances might be adduced, of their having occasionally been held at Abingdon, long before this period, and therefore the passage in question, could mean nothing more, than to thank him for having got that fixed, which was before uncertain. While the judges are here on the circuit, their expences are defrayed by the corporation, without any limitation, but formerly they were allowed "one mutton, one veal, three barrels of beer, one gallon of sack, and one gallon of claret."—Corporation Diary, 1640.

+ Satis probatum est, quod vxL. în Gaynz et xIs. în forinseco hundredo de Rading non debent allocari Vicecomiti; quia sine illis habet Vicecomes în terris Assisis unde plene respondeat ad summam Corpus Comitatus et v solidos plus.—Memor. II. H. 3. Rot. 10. Berkshire.—Maddox Hist. of the Exchequer, page 652.

Cast Tree of Mich - Budge !



Whereupon the corporation resisted the payment, and the county justices CHAP. committed the constable of St. Lawrence's parish to the county gaol, for not levying the fine; but, on the cause being heard at the assizes, a verdict was given in favor of the town.

The corporation likewise rebuilt the High-bridge, of a light and elegant construction, with stone,\* in the room of the old wooden bridge, which was often dangerous to the public, and at all times incommodious.

The alms-houses were also mostly rebuilt, or put into the best state of repair, to the great comfort of the individuals who resided in them, as well as to the credit of the members of the corporation, who thus judiciously expended the funds entrusted to their care, instead of squandering them in their annual feasts, which had been too much practised by their predecessors.

Here are three parish churches: St. Mary's, St. Giles's, and St. Lawrence's, which we shall speak of hereafter; and several meeting houses for protestant dissenters. Among the principal of these, is the independant meeting house in Broad-street, lately under the pastorship of the rev. Thomas Noon, upon whose demise the rev. Archibald Douglas was elected preacher, Calvinists by the unanimous consent of a respectable congregation. The meeting-house has been lately rebuilt, and enlarged, at a considerable expence, with the addition of a burial ground, by a subscription among the more wealthy part of the congregation. It contains a numerous and respectable audience, and is well adapted for the purpose.

The baptists are a numerous and respectable congregation. Their principal meeting house has been lately much enlarged, and made more capable of containing the members of this society, which seems daily increasing. Their burial-ground is in Church-street.

The quakers, as a sect, are the only ones among the dissenters in Reading, Quakers, who appear to be on the decline. Education, that great polisher of human nature, may in some measure account for this change. The intellect, purified and enlightened, by the study of the best authors, among the ancient and modern writers, spurns at those fetters which the ignorance or fanaticism of former ages have prepared for it, and prompts the younger members of this religious society to rise superior to early prejudices, and boldly dare to think for themselves. Another reason for this decline, may be given, from the stiff-

\* On digging the foundation for the new bridge, the workmen discovered part of an ancient pier, which, from the spring of the arch, shewed the original span to have been very small. This fragment being too firmly cemented together, to be removed without great difficulty, was worked into the new one. From the smallness of the span, it is probable the passage of the water in this place, was, in the early ages, divided into small streams or brooks, and did not flow in one channel as at present.

ness of demeanor, and dress of the quakers, so uncongenial with the manners and habits of the present age, but which has long been considered among the discriminating marks of the members of this society; it is no wonder, therefore, if when these are laid aside, a change of religious opinions, in some measure founded upon them, should follow. Their meeting house, with the burial ground annexed to it, is situated in Church-street, and held under a lease from the corporation for ninety-nine years.

In addition to the above, may be enumerated the methodists, who have, Methodist in like manner, seceded from the established church, though they make use of its liturgy, and the other offices appointed in the common prayer. They boast of a stricter conformity to the tenets of our first reformers, than is observable among the regular clergy: but, if time is to be considered as the criterion of religious orthodoxy; if we are still to be tyed down to opinions that were held in the dark ages, when the reformed churches first emerged from the errors of popery, all the benefits derived from the invention of printing, by which knowledge has been diffused, and all the labors of the learned, since that time, have been thrown away. Their chapel is in Castle-street, built, from a plan by Mr. Billing, on the site of an ancient religious house, lately the county gaol. This society does not support a constant preacher, but is occasionally supplied with one from other congregations. Mankind are in general delighted with novelty, and this, with their holding several calvinistic tenets in common with the other dissenters, occasions their chapel to be very much crowded.

> In Minster-street is another meeting-house, called Salem chapel, belonging to a society of methodists, who have seceded from the chapel in Castle-street.

> In London-street are two meeting-houses, one for the cudworthians or disciples of Mr. Cudworth; the other for the unitarians, but whether for arians or socinians, I have not learned.

> Here is also a catholic chapel, lately erected by some French emigrants, in Vastern-laue; And a newly erected meeting-house, for baptists, in Sievierstreet, built by subscription.

Lecture.

The monthly lecture was established in 1618, in consequence of a letter to the mayor and corporation, from the then bishop of Salisbury, requesting "their assistance in promoting so necessary a measure;" this they very readily granted, and, as a further support to it, they soon after entered into the following agreement:

" It was agreed the 2d of September, 1628, that the lecturer shall have two shillings and sixpence a day, every lecture day, paid to him that shall provide his diet, and it shall be raised of this company, after the rate of six-

pence per month, and every man shall pay from time to time a month's pay before hand, and to the end it shall take effect, and hold to them, the company present have paid their sixpence a piece, which is just twelve shillings."

CHAP.

The lecture was originally read weekly: but at present it is appointed to be preached in the first Tuesday in every month. At first it was read at either of the churches indiscriminately, but in 1624 the corporation ordered it to be at the church of the parish, in which the mayor for the time being resided; and in 1650, it was fixed at St. Lawrence's church, where it still remains,

In 1653, Mr. John Webb, of Reading, gent. by will dated the 20th of November 1653, "gave to the corporation a rent charge of four pounds a year on lands at Shinfield, (now in the possession of Mr. Body, ) towards the maintenance of a weekly lecture at St. Lawrence's church for ever."

Among the public buildings in this town, may be reckoned the theatre, Theatre. which has lately been crected here, under the act of parliament past a few years ago for the regulation of provincial theatres. The house is neat and convenient, and capable of containing a numerous audience, but the exhibitions are confined to a month or six weeks in autumn. At which time, a respectable company attend, under the management of Mr. Thornton; when, notwithstanding the number of religious people in the town, who are enemies to theatrical representations, the theatre is respectably attended, and the players encouraged to exert their best endeavors to gratify the audience, by the exhibition of some of our best plays.

Plays are acted in every respectable town in Europe, and are acknowledged to have a greater tendency to polish the manners, improve the mind, and form the character of a nation, than any other species of entertainment; and while the actors observe a proper decorum in performing their parts, and a decency of behavior off the stage, they not only deserve the protection of the legislature, but the encouragement of the public.

The town is very well supplied with water, as well from the river Kennet, and its collateral branches, which pass through it, as from a great number Springs. of wells, which have been opened in almost every street; but, notwithstanding their proximity to this river, it is the general opinion, that they derive their waters from the Thames, though at a greater distance. This opinion may in part be true; because the former, in its way through the town, passes over a bed of stiff clay, impervious to water, while the latter flows along a bed of chalk, which eagerly imbibes it; and, it may be observed, that in digging wells here, whatever may be their depth, it is necessary to penetrate into the

stratum of chalk, before water can be procured. But, though the Thames may be the grand reservoir, from whence our wells are principally supplied, yet there can be no doubt, that in many parts of the town, they derive a partial supply of water from other sources, because it is a well known fact, that the springs, in different parts of the town, possess very different qualities, which would not be the case, if they were all supplied from the same source. This difference in the quality, consists chiefly in the different degrees of hardness, as it is termed, of the water, in some parts than in others. At the new bridewell, I have been informed, the water is of so corrosive a quality, that the cistern in which it is preserved, has been persorated like a sieve, three or four times in the space of twelve years. The same phenomenon is observed to take place all along the north side of Friar-street, while the pumps on the south side are only partially affected by it, as is the case in Broad-street, and the north side of Minster-street, while on the south side of the same street, the water in the wells is so free from any corrosive quality, that the leaden pipes have remained, for a century, uninjured, as do those in Gun-street, and on the south side of Castle-street, about half wav up; above which level. and all along the north side of the same street, the water in the wells is found to be more or less hard. As the water becomes more and more soft in the wells, the nearer they approach to the Kennet, it is probable that they are indebted to this river for their greater degree of softness. This is easily accounted for, from the different quality of the water in the two rivers, which no doubt partakes of the soil through which they flow; that of the Kennet, from its spring head to Reading, passing through a soil almost wholly composed of peat and vegetable matter, must be of a softer nature than that of the bed of chalk. which forms the stratum of the Thames, as well as the substance of those lofty hills, under which it flows for the greater part in its course to Caversham. and which, abounding with a sulphate of lime, probably impregnate the water with the same corrosive quality.

Water Works. The water in these wells having been found unfit for many household purposes, recourse has been had to the waters of the Kennet, which, by means of works erected in Mill-lane, are distributed to most of the houses in the town, at a small expence. This necessary undertaking was planned in 1694, by Ambrose Crowley, Daniel Dennell, Edward Dyson, and Richard Lowbridge, with whom the corporation entered into the following agreement:

"1st. They grant unto the aforesaid undertakers, a term of one thousand years, quietly to enjoy the same.

"2d. They shall have the liberty to employ their own men, to make and mend the water-works, so as they do not become chargeable.

"3d. They agree to quit, free, and excuse, as far as in them lies, the

water-works, from all taxes and payments whatsoever, except such as are imposed on them by act of parliament.

CHAP.

"4th. They engage to prevent all other persons from building any engine, or water work, to serve any part of the town with water, during the term aforesaid.

"5th. The grant to be under the rent of five shillings per annum.

"6th. The mayor, aldermen, and burgesses shall have liberty, in case of fire, to open any of the pipes, for water to extinguish the same; the breaches to be repaired at the expence of the corporation.

"7th. The said undertakers to be obliged to serve so many of the inhabitants with water, as will agree for, and take the same. Times of reparation, great frosts, and high floods excepted.

"Sth. That the undertakers shall lay a pipe to the Counter-house, without rent or fine for the same, subject to all other agreements, and common covenants, which are to be inserted in the tenants' leases. The pipes to be laid at the Counter-house charge."

Under the sanction of these clauses in their lease, the undertakers erected a small engine in Mill-lane, on the mill-stream, having agreed with the proprietor of the mill for one hundred superficial inches of water for the purpose of turning the water wheel; but the supply from this machine was, for many years, very inadequate to the demands of the town, owing to the imperfect state of the engine, and the want of skill in the managers, as well to the deficiency of the funds necessary for keeping the works in repair. The original shares had, from time to time, been disposed of, at low prices, to individuals, whose interest in the proprietaryship being small, gave themselves little trouble in the management of the concern; and some of the proprietors, or their heirs, had even left the town, so that the works were daily getting more and more inefficient, when, about the commencement of the present century, two respectable gentlemen of the town, having purchased the principal shares, immediately determined to improve the works, so as to make them answer all the purposes required from them. Accordingly, they have erected, at a great expence, an engine of much larger dimensions than the original one, and upon an entire new principle, by which they are enabled to supply the most distant and highest parts of the town with water, at a trifling expence to each inhabitant, who may wish to enjoy so great an accommodation, and with so much regularity and certainty, that the supply is seldom interrupted, except in times of floods and frost, which no human ingenuity can at all times provide for or Their cistern is built on the high ground in Broad-street, and plugs

CHAP, are placed in all the principal streets, affording a ready supply of water whenever a fire breaks out in any part of the town.

It is surprising, considering the great profits the insurance offices make, and the large sums that are annually remitted to London, for insurances here from fire, that none of the wealthier inhabitants have hitherto instituted an office, which might at the same time secure the property of individuals, and promote the benefit of the persons insuring in it.

The advantages derived to this town, from a plentiful supply of water, in case of fire, renders the risk so trifling, that if every person insured had a proprietary interest, as is the case in the Norwich insurance office, the expence would not amount to a tenth part of what it now does, as the greater part of the premium would be returned at the close of the annual accounts. As it cannot be to the interest of the offices to make known the sums they annually draw from this town for insurance, it is impossible to sav what the real amount may be; but taking the number of houses at 2000, and supposing them to pay, on an average, for the value of the premises, and stock in trade, &c. only 15s. each, the amount would be 1500l. per ann, which is something less than half the loss that has been incurred, by this town, from fire, during the last 60 years, as appears by the following list of fires, with the gross valuation of the damages:

| 20.10 ( | ing indice, with the group throughout or the dumin     | 500. |
|---------|--------------------------------------------------------|------|
| In 1754 | Six hop-kilns, two barns, and 26 cwt. of hops,         | €    |
|         | destroyed, in Sievier-street, value . ,                | 300  |
| 1755    | A stable, granary, and one small dwelling-house, at    |      |
|         | the Elephant,                                          | 200  |
| 1756    | A workshop, and two granaries, by the Abbey mill,      | 150  |
| 1774    | One hay rick destroyed, and three damaged, at          |      |
|         | Hocker's-green,                                        | 100  |
| 1785    | A stable, work-shop, and one horse, in the Wharf,      | 100  |
| 1789    | A work-shop, chaise-house, stable, and barn, at the    |      |
|         | same place,                                            | 100  |
| 1791    | A range of stables, and nine horses, in Castle-street, | 400  |
| 1798    | One house destroyed, and three others damaged, at      |      |
|         | the entrance of the Forbury,                           | 800  |
| 1799    | A work-shop, stable, soap-house, &c. in the Market,    | 300  |
| 1802    | A boat-house, shed, and about 20 tons of hay, in the   |      |
|         | Wharf,                                                 | 150  |
| 1804    | A carpenter's shop, some deals, &c. in London-street,  | 150  |
|         | A work-shop, and cottage, in the Island,               | 100  |
| 1812    | An outhouse, some cork, and a horse, in Friar-street,  | 100  |
| 1813    | The lower part of a dwelling-house, in Oxford-road,    | 70   |
|         | m.4.1 a                                                | 2090 |
|         | Total €                                                | 3020 |

It does not appear that this borough ever possessed any very valuable right of common; that at Portman's-brook, now erroneously called Potman's-brook, being the only one we have any certain knowledge of, and that only from the following entry in the Diary; the right itself having been lost beyond the memory of man:

CHAP.

"The ninthe day of maie in the 20th yeere of our Soveraigne Lord Harry the seventh, 1505, in the time of Thomas Carpenter then beinge major, this acte and statute was made, by the assent and agreement of all the Comburgers there, that every Burger shall have a daie to putte theire kine into the lease of Portman's-brook, the mundaie next before the feaste of Corpus Christi (5 June.)"

It is remarkable, that this statute, as it is here called, was not solely an act of the corporate body, but of all the *comburgers* (freemen of the borough,) who at least gave their assent to the measure, if it did not originate with them.

Though this brook is still in existence, it is difficult to say, on which side the road this commonable land was situated. A tradition has been handed down, among the lower class of the inhabitants, whose interest was most concerned in it, that the Vasterns\* formerly belonged to the town's people, and as such, was used as a place for sports, by the junior classes; but, as I have not been able to discover any foundation for this tradition, in any of the books belonging to the corporation, I cannot say, how far it is founded in fact, though I am rather inclined to think, the place here designated was on the opposite side of the road, and what is now called the Hog Moors, which belongs to the corporation, who probably enclosed it, as lords of the soil, in the civil wars, or soon after, which they might easily do, from its having made part of the fortifications of the town, and consequently was become of less consideration with the inhabitants.

Since the dissolution of the abbey, the Forbury+ has been considered by the inhabitants, as common; for though this spot, with other of the abbeylands, is let by the crown to private individuals, who consider it as freehold, yet the town has a prescriptive right, not only to hold fairs in it, but to use

In confirmation of this conjecture of Mr. Horne Tooke, it may be observed, that the Forbury was always considered as being out of the jurisdiction of the magistrates of the town.

<sup>\*</sup> If this word is a corruption of the old law term Vastum, a waste or common, as I conceive it is, it very much strengthens this tradition.

<sup>†</sup> They say indeed Fauxbourg, corruptly for Forisbourg, as it was anciently written by Froissart and others (La bourg de Four n'éstoit anciennement qu'un Fauxbourg, qu'on appelloit en Savoyard Bourg de Four, c'est à dire Bourg de dehors). Histoire de la Ville de Genève, par Jacob Spon; who gives us likewise from their archives, the translation of it into Burgi foris. For the same reason, I suppose, a part of the town of Reading is called the Forbury, i. e. without the town.—Tooke's Diversions of Purley.

it as a place of amusement, and exercise. This right both the corporation and the inhabitants have been always tenacious of preserving. Even, during the confusion of the civil wars, when the rights of individuals were but little regarded, we find by the following entry in the Diary, that the corporation were not neglectful of their own rights, or the interests of the people:

"George Harrison acquainted the company, that colonel Hammond had given orders to set up a gate and stiles, at the entrance into the Forbury, and desireth to know, whether the company would forbid him: but was answered, that he may set up a gate and stiles, so as he do in no wise prejudice the liberties of the town, in the said Forbury, for if he do, the town will endeavor to defend their liberties."

Colonel Hammond had the command of the garrison in the abbey, at that time, and was also governor of the town, under the parliament; yet this, we see, did not deter the corporation from a determination to support their right to this favorite spot.

About two years afterwards, we find the inhabitants calling upon the corporation for their assistance towards leveling the works which had been thrown up in the Forbury, for the protection of the garrison, to the end "the fairs might be kept, and the inhabitants of the town enjoy their privileges, as formerly."

Shortly after this, Mr. Harrison, who had been so cautious as not to execute colonel Hammond's orders, without acquainting the corporation with them, took the liberty of building on some part of the Forbury, on his own account, without giving them any notice of his intentions, or of his right so to do; whereupon they ordered the sergeants "to remove all his wood, and to fill in his ditches, and besides, to forbide his building any more there, that the fairs might be kept without interruption."

From these instances, it appears, that the corporation were principally desirous of preserving the right of holding fairs in the Forbury, while the inhabitants were equally anxious to secure their former privileges. These indeed were not openly disputed, till 1776; at which time, the reverend John Spicer, then master of the free school, conceiving that the public use of this place was originally confined to the keeping of fairs in it, and that the privilege claimed by the junior classes of the inhabitants, of playing at cricket and other exercises, was an encroachment on the rights of the lessees under the crown, determined, if possible, to put a stop to the practice, though it had been sanctioned by an uninterrupted enjoyment of more than two hundred

years, and accordingly published the following advertisement, which appeared in the Reading Mercury, on the 6th of June this year:

CHAP. VII.

Whereas, the pasture land, in the outer court of the abbey, called the Forbury, and subject to the public use, only, during the continuance of the fairs, as recited in the charter of queen Elizabeth and king Charles the first,\* to the corporation of Reading, though many persons have erroneously asserted it to be common to the inhabitants in general, at all times of the year; and, whereas the said Forbury has been improved at great expence, with the view of ornament, and doing credit to the town, and such intention is frustrated, by persons playing there at cricket, to the great annoyance of passengers, and damage of the pasture; all persons so offending, are desired to forbear such practices for the future, or their pretended claim will be disputed in due course of law, by me,

In consequence of the above advertisement, a meeting of the inhabitants was called, to consider of the best means of defending their right to the use of the Forbury, when upwards of one hundred respectable tradesmen signed a resolution, " to defend any one or more persons who might be prosecuted for playing there, either by Mr. Spicer or any other person." They also agreed to take the opinion of counsel, as to the legitimacy of their claim; which being answered in favor of the town, they advertised a cricket-match to be played in the Forbury in the following week. This was numerously attended, every well-wisher to the town, conceiving it a duty to support the public right to this favored spot, and was done with the intent to give that gentleman an opportunity of bringing the matter to trial; but as he did not think fit so to do, they appointed a committee of three gentlemen, to wait on John Blagrave, esq. one of the lessees under the crown, to know, if he objected to the youths of the town playing in the Forbury? who replied, "that he had no objection to their playing, provided they asked it as a matter of favor:" this they refused to do; and added, "that, if he would try the matter in a court of law, the gentlemen who had attended the meeting were determined to defend the liberties of the town."

In consequence of this spirited conduct of the inhabitants, no further opposition was made, either by Mr. Blagrave or Mr. Spicer; and the young people have ever since, uninterruptedly enjoyed the privilege of playing in the Forbury, as before, till the present year, (1813) when the following anonymous hand-bill was circulated in the town:

<sup>\*</sup> The reverend gentleman, on this occasion, was not very scrupulous in asserting what he knew to be a falshood; for whatever may be the powers in this respect granted by queen Elizabeth, it is certain that no mention is made of the Forbury, in that of Charles I.

"Whereas, several acts of mischievous aggression have lately been committed on the narrow part of the Forbury, rented for the use of the grammar-school, with manifest injury to that establishment; it is with great reluctance, but from absolute necessity, that notice is hereby given, that whosoever shall trespass on that ground will be prosecuted.—June 9, 1813."

In consequence of this notice, the inhabitants, friends to the prosperity of Reading, called a meeting at the council-chamber, on the Wednesday following, at six o'clock in the evening, for the purpose of taking into consideration the propriety of adopting some measures to preserve as heretofore, without infringing on the privileges of the borough, part of the Forbury for the use of Reading school, and, by timely interference, prevent, if possible, any appeal to the courts of law.

Though this meeting seems to have been called by the friends of the school, who wished that the part commonly used by the scholars in their amusements might be preserved to them, at the same time infringing as little as possible on the privileges of the inhabitants, yet the numbers that attended, being decidedly of opinion, that in giving up one part of the Forbury would only be opening the door to further encroachments on their rights, and might hazard the loss of the whole, came to the following resolutions:

" READING, July 18, 1813.

"RESOLVED, 1st.—That the inhabitants of this borough have an established right to walk, exercise, and divert themselves, in and upon the Forbury, and every part of it, at their free will and pleasure, without the interruption or disturbance of any person whomsoever; and that they have, from time immemorial, used and exercised such right.

"RESOLVED, 2dly.—That Reading school has never had an exclusive right to any part of the Forbury.

"RESOLVED, 3rdly.—That a subscription be forthwith opened, to support and defend the rights of the inhabitants, against any attempts that may be made to deprive them of the same.

## " W. BLANDY, CHAIRMAN."

It now remains to be seen, should the author of the above hand-bill put his threats in execution, whether the corporation, as they are bound to do, will, in the words of their predecessors, determine to defend the liberties of the town; or whether the inhabitants at large, will be left to protect their right to the use of the Forbury, handed down to them unimpaired by their ancestors: in either case, there can be no doubt of the ultimate success of their cause, founded on a prescriptive right of more than two hundred years, and frequently asserted with success, both by the magistrates and the inhabitants.

A public library has lately been instituted by some of the principal inhabitants of the town and neighborhood, under the title of the Reading Institution. The shares, as first subscribed, were purchased at thirty pounds cach, but a fresh call has since been made. With the sum thus raised, a house was fitted up at the entrance into the Forbury, with reading rooms and other conveniences for a library, and a residence for the librarian. This institution is in a flourishing state, and promises to be of the most essential benefit to the inhabitants, who, at a small expence, are enabled, by reading most of the best authors, both ancient and modern, with which the library is already stored, to become not only useful but enlightened members of society.

CHAP! VII.

Institution.

Among other useful institutions in this town, the dispensary, lately established in Chain-lane, is not the least beneficial to the poorer classes of society, Dispenwho are supplied with medicines, gratis, under the direction of the medical gentlemen of the town, who attend the dispensary daily, for the purpose of prescribing for the poor such medicines as the nature of their cases may require: an act of benevolence the more meritorious, as most of them have very little time to spare from the more profitable employment of visiting their own patients. The house is the property of the corporation; and the expences of the medicines, and other charges, are paid by a voluntary subscription.

sary.

After the dissolution of the monasteries, and other religious houses, the poor, who had before been supported by the charitable provision made for them by the founders of those places, were reduced to the sad necessity of depending on the frigid hand of voluntary charity, scantily held forth,\* for that support, which their age or infirmities entitled them to expect from the humane and charitable. But this uncertain mode of relief being soon found inadequate to their wants, and encreasing numbers, occasioned the passing of an act of parliament, in the 34th of queen Elizabeth, appointing overseers to superintend their conduct, and to relieve their necessities, by a rate to be levied on the parishioners in their respective parishes. Though this measure was become highly necessary, at the time, and, from the distresses of the poor, was loudly called for by the nation, it unfortunately laid the foundation of that system of poor's laws, which is now become so burthensome, and ruinous, to the middling class of parishioners, in all parts of the kingdom.

Poor.

The mode of assessment, at first adopted, was, by what was called a week's pay, the value of which varied according to the size, or opulence of the parish, and accordingly a greater or less number of weeks' pay, like the

<sup>\*</sup> The sum collected for the poor in St. Mary's parish, from charitable donations, in 1577, was only thirty-nine shillings.

Roman months in Germany, were raised within the year, to supply the wants of the poor. The amount of one week's pay, in St. Mary's parish, in this town, appears to have been at first about twenty shillings. This was raised among the inhabitants, who were divided into four classes, in the following ratio: The first paid two pence, the second three half-pence, the third one penny, and the fourth one half-penny. It is probable, that at first, the number of weeks pay to be raised within the year was fixed at twelve, making about twelve pounds per annum, for the maintenance of the poor in St. Mary's parish.\* This number of weeks soon began to encrease, at first by slow degrees, but afterwards very rapidly, as will appear from the following table of assessments, taken, every tenth year, from the parish registers, till the present mode of assessment, by a pound rate, was adopted:

| Years. |   |   |   |   | W | ceks Pay. | 1 | Years. |   |   |   |   |   | $\mathcal{H}$ | eeks Pay. |
|--------|---|---|---|---|---|-----------|---|--------|---|---|---|---|---|---------------|-----------|
| 1647   |   |   |   | ٠ |   | 24        |   | 1707   | • |   |   |   | ŧ |               | 286       |
| 1657.  |   | • | • |   | • | 40        |   | 1717   |   |   |   | • |   |               | 338       |
| 1667   |   |   | • |   |   | 63        |   | 1727   | • |   | • |   |   |               | 312       |
| 1677†. |   | • |   |   | ٠ | 156       |   | 1737   |   |   |   | • |   |               | 442       |
| 1687   | • |   |   |   |   | 208       |   | 1747   |   |   |   |   | ٠ |               | 364       |
| 1697 . |   |   |   |   | • | 338       |   | 1757   |   | ٠ |   |   |   |               | 547       |

The great increase in the number of weeks pay for the last year, was probably the reason of their adopting the present mode of assessing the inhabitants, by a pound rate on lands, houses, and stock in trade, in the proportion of two thirds on houses, and the full amount of the rate on lands. Of late years, these assessments have been increased considerably, by the payment of the parliamentary allowances, to the wives and families of militia men, while absent from the town on duty, and for bounties for substitutes, to the following amount in 1812:

|              | On houses. |    |        |      |       |    | Amount of rate. |    |                |  |
|--------------|------------|----|--------|------|-------|----|-----------------|----|----------------|--|
|              | 5.         | d. | So     | d.   | S.    | d. | l.              | 5. | d.             |  |
| St. Mary's,  | 7          | 0  | 10     | 6    | 2     | 6  | 3789            | 11 | 6              |  |
| St. Lawrence | e's, 6     | 0  | 9      | 0    | . 3   | 0  | 2579            | 11 | 4              |  |
| St. Giles's, | 4          | 2  | 6      | 3    |       |    | 2616            | 0  | $3\frac{1}{2}$ |  |
|              |            | T  | otal o | f on | e yea | r, | <b>₤</b> 8985   | 3  | ] 1/2          |  |

<sup>\*</sup> In the year 1607, the sum levied for the use of the poor, was 171, 12s. 5d.

<sup>†</sup> In 1674, the churchwardens and overseers of St. Mary's parish, alarmed at the rapid increase of the rates, made an order, "that any person receiving strangers into their houses, and not giving security to the parish, within forty days, their taxes should be doubled." And, strange as it may appear, this order was enforced in 1676, on Richard Landers, who, for this offence, was obliged to pay the penalty.

So much and so rapidly has this burthen encreased on the inhabitants, the industrious part of whom are, by this mode, obliged to maintain the idle and profligate members of society, as well as the aged and infirm.

CHAP. VII.

This subject has attracted the attention of so many able writers, that it is unnecessary, in this place, to enter largely upon it. I shall only, therefore, observe, that were a proper discrimination made, in the distribution of the public money, so that none but real objects of charity should be supported, and the price of labor be regulated by that of provisions, the poor would be prompted to industry, and encouraged to lay up a small annual sum for their future support, instead of looking, as they now do, to that wretched asylum for indigence, a parish workhouse.

One of the principal causes of the great increase of the poor-rates, of late years, is, I have no doubt, owing principally, to the low price of labor, in proportion to the high price of all the necessary articles of life. Give a man an adequate reward for his labor, equal to the support of an honorable independence, and he will spurn at the idea of relief from the parish, if voluntarily offered, as an insult to that spirit of freedom which the poor, equal to the rich, inherit from nature.\*

That the present price of day labor is greatly disproportioned to the high prices of provisions, is, I believe too evident to be controverted; but, if any doubt remains on the subject, the following statement of the prices of both labor and provisions, in 155S, prior to the passing of the acts for the relief of the poor, compared with those of the present time, must satisfy every unprejudiced person.

\* Though there is no poor's tax in Scotland, there is not a people in the world among whom real objects of compassion find readier protection and assistance. To the honor of the lower class of the Scotch, they think it disgraceful to beg, and even to accept the smallest charitable donation. They therefore, for the most part, pursue their different paths of industry, as long as they are able to crawl about, and subsist rather upon the private bounty, however scanty, of their nearest relations, than make their wants known to the parish. It is only real and urgent necessity, that obliges the humblest Scot to accept the elemosynary contributions of his countrymen, which are not compulsory, but voluntary. When the late lord Kinnoul retired from public life in England, to his paternal estate in Perthshire, he was astonished to find there was not one pauper in the parish. The collection at the church doors on Sundays, was either sent to other parishes, or laid out at interest, as a growing fund for contingencies. His lordship, sole proprietor of the parish, struck with this circumstance, recommended to the kirk session, to distribute the weekly contributions among poor cottagers. Of these, however, there was not one who would accept a shilling; and at last, when it was offered in the form of flax, to poor, but industrious women, they did not accept it without hesitation and reluctance.

This sense of honor among the lowest people in Scotland, is a powerful restraint on dissipation, and an incentive to industry; while it is justly remarked, that the parliamentary provisions for the poor in England, encourage idleness, insolence, and debauchery, and increase the load of taxation on the industrious and sober part of the nation.—Newto's Tour in Scotland, 1785.

Tradesmen and mechanics, from the nature of their employment, being generally collected, in large towns, in great numbers, have opportunities of combining together for the purpose of compelling their employers to raise the price of their labors, which accounts for the wages of this description of persons being at all times equal to, if not surpassing, the average price of provisions: but day laborers, who are seldom collected in great numbers, and consequently have no such opportunities, are compelled to labor for a sum scarcely adequate to support a miserable existence. We shall, therefore, confine our comparison to this useful but neglected description of persons.

In 1558, the wages of a day laborer was 6d. per diem, or 3s. per week; with which sum might be purchased, for his week's consumption,

|        |     |                                       | s. | d.              |
|--------|-----|---------------------------------------|----|-----------------|
|        |     |                                       | 1  | 3               |
| 4      |     | •                                     | 0  | $10\frac{I}{2}$ |
|        |     |                                       | 0  | $3\frac{1}{2}$  |
| •      |     | b                                     | 0  | 2               |
|        |     |                                       | 0  | 1               |
| т<br>ф |     | ٠                                     | 0  | 4               |
|        |     |                                       |    |                 |
|        |     |                                       | 3  | 0               |
|        | a • | • • • • • • • • • • • • • • • • • • • |    | 0               |

In 1813, the wages of a day laborer, 2s. per diem, or 12s. per week: if therefore he were to purchase the same articles now, the sums would be as follow:

| Half a bushel of wheat, at 118s. per qr. Fourteen pounds of meat, at 9d. | s.<br>7<br>10 | d. 4½ 6        |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------|----------------|
| Seven pints of strong beer,                                              | 1             | 9              |
| One pound of butter, .                                                   | 1             | 2              |
| One pound of cheese,                                                     | 0             | 10             |
| Other articles,                                                          | 0             | 0              |
| -                                                                        |               |                |
| <i>₤</i> 1                                                               | 1             | $7\frac{1}{2}$ |

This therefore is nearly the proportionate price a day laborer should now receive for his week's work, to put him on the same footing with his own class, before the establishment of the poor rates.

Were the legislature, instead of attempting to amend and improve, as it is called, the poor's laws, to abolish the system, and to establish, in their stead, a more just and adequate rate of wages, a very great benefit would be derived

to all classes of the community: the poor, for whose benefit they have ineffectually been adopted, would be emancipated from their present degraded situation; and the industrious tradesman, who now contributes to their support, be relieved from a burthen that threatens the ruin of many who contribute to their relief.

CHAP. VII.

There are, we may venture to say, very few, that would refuse to give up all their claims on the parish, if their pay were advanced in proportion.

The legislature, aware that the wages of the laboring poor were inadequate to the maintenance of their families, has authorized the parish officers to pay a weekly sum to each individual, in proportion to the number of his children, which, in some instances, more than doubles their earnings. Would it not therefore be more advisable, to give him the same sum at once, as the price of his labor? as, by thus freeing him from the degraded state of dependance on others, you would thereby stimulate him to greater exertions for the support of himself and family.\* In this case, however, it would be necessary, perhaps, to guard against that thoughtlessness, and want of foresight, so natural to man in every station of life; and, this cannot better be done, than by forming the poorer individuals of each parish, into benefit clubs, under the guardianship and control of the principal inhabitants. To these clubs, every individual who gains his bread by daily labor, should be induced to pay a small weekly sum, to be set apart for his use, in time of age or infirmity. By this means, they would receive all the benefit arising from these institutions, without the disadvantage of spending additional sums, on club nights, and annual feasts, which, on the present plans, are a great drawback on the benefits expected to be derived from these otherwise useful institutions.

The increase of the annual expences for the support of the poor of the three parishes, in the year 1726, suggested to some of the principal inhabitants,

\* Nothing can be more partial and unjust, than the present mode of levying this tax indiscriminately, when connected with the supplying the deficiency in the wages of the laboring poor—For instance, a person engaged in a large manufactory, or a gentleman raising a spacious building, instead of paying their workmen the full value of their labor, sends them, at the end of the week, to the parish officers, to make up the deficiency required for their sustenance, which must be levied on the parish at large, who are very little interested in the success of the one, or the ostentation of the other. In like manner, among farmers, the proprietor or renter of five hundred, or a thousand pounds per annum, who employs a number of day laborers on his farm, receives back, by their weekly allowance from the parish, all that he may have paid to his proportion of the poor's rate, while housekeepers, tradesmen, and even little farmers, who, with the assistance of their families, perform all the drudgery of their small concerns, have no means of remunerating themselves from the produce of the rates, which they are obliged to pay, to the benefit of the overgrown farmer, on whom the burthen ought principally to fall.

the idea of incorporating them into one body, and, as the Oracle was at that time in part unoccupied, that building, with the consent of the corporation, was fixed on for the receptacle of the united poor, and the following articles of agreement entered into, and signed by the respective officers of each parish:

"Articles of agreement, had, made, and concluded the 13th day of June, in the 12th year of the reign of our sovereign lord George, by the grace of God, &c. between the church-wardens and overseers of the poor of the parish of St. Lawrence, in Reading, in the county of Berks, of the first part, and the church-wardens and overseers of the poor of the parish of St. Mary, in Reading aforesaid, of the second part, and the church-wardens and overseers of the poor of the parish of St. Giles, in Reading aforesaid, of the third part.

"Whereas, a certain house, called the Oracle, in the parish of St. Mary aforesaid, is agreed upon by the parties to these presents, to be the house and place for maintaining and keeping their poor people. And, whereas the fitting up the said house, for the necessary reception of the said poor, and the providing beds, bedding, clothes, and all other necessaries and implements, for the keeping, maintaining, and employing the said poor people, will be a considerable charge to the parishioners of the several parishes.

"And it being the intent and agreement of the parishioners of the said three several parishes, that such charges, and expences, should be born and paid, in equal proportions, according to the number of poor people of each respective parish, who shall be placed in the said house, by and from each respective parish, there to be kept, maintained, and employed, for the benefit, advantage, and ease, of the parishioners of the parish to which such persons do respectively belong; and that separate and distinct accounts, be for those purposes kept by a proper person, who shall have the care of such poor people. For that end it is agreed, and concluded, by and between all the parties to these presents, for themselves, and for the respective parishioners of each parish, to which they belong, in manner following, viz.

"That a proper person shall be elected and chosen, by the parties to these presents, to be the master and governor of such poor people, so to be kept, maintained, and employed, in the said house, under such rules, orders, and regularities, as shall be approved of, by the parties to these presents, and their successors from time to time, and that such master shall have such salary and allowances, as shall be agreed upon by the parties to these presents, to be paid in such manner as shall be for that purpose also agreed upon.

"That the said house shall be fitted up with beds, bedding, cloathes,

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VII.

brewing utensils, and implements of brewing, and all other necessaries, of what nature or kind soever, and also all such necessaries, as shall be agreed upon by the parties to these presents, for employing the said poor people, shall be forthwith provided, for the keeping, maintaining, and employing, such poor persons, and that the same shall be paid for in manner aforesaid, by the parties to these presents, out of the rates made, or to be made, for the relief of the poor of the respective parishes.

"And it is further agreed, that the respective officers of each parish, shall forthwith provide fifteen bedsteads a-piece, to be placed in the said house, for the reception of the poor of each respective parish. In witness, &c."

In consequence of this agreement, the parishes of St. Mary and St. Lawrence sent in their proportion of furniture, with their respective poor,\* but
that of St. Giles refusing to send their's, for reasons not at present known,
but probably owing to the alarm excited among the poor from the commencement of the measure, this economical plan was dropt.

During the short time this establishment lasted, it seems to have been conducted with great order and regularity: The poor who were able to work were employed in spinning of flax for the sail cloth manufacturers, cotton for candle-wicks, washing, and the necessary duties of the house. There was besides a school established in it, where the children were taught to read.

When any persons were to be admitted into the house, they were obliged to bring an order from the mayor, or a justice of the peace belonging to the corporation, and signed by the church-wardens and overseers of the parish to which they belonged, and their names, age, and parish were entered in an alphabetical register. If found necessary, they were new clothed, at their admission, and properly cleansed, to prevent the beds and bedding being infested with vermine.

A committee, of the most respectable inhabitants of the two parishes, met, every Friday, at the house, to regulate their affairs, to hear complaints, and to redress grievances, whose proceedings were regularly entered in a book kept for that purpose. Once a fortnight the accounts of the house were regularly audited, and passed, and the quota of expences adjusted to each parish. Prayers were read to the poor every morning, Sundays excepted, to all who were able to attend; and on that day, they attended morning and evening service at their parish churches.

<sup>\*</sup> The following list of persons sent into the house, from the parish of St. Lawrence, forms a just criterion of the persons deemed, at that time, fit to partake of parish relief:

<sup>&</sup>quot;Sixteen aged, one natural child, four widows, fourteen orphans, one idiot, one lunatic, and one lame, in all thirty-eight." At present there are upwards of 100 in each of the three work-houses.

On the whole, the regulations adopted on this occasion, appear to have been calculated, both for the advantage of the poor, who were the immediate objects of them, and of those who were to contribute to their support; and if persevered in, must have been attended with great benefit to the town, as by uniting all the poor under one roof, much regularity and order would have been produced in the expenditure of the public money, and many of the present sources of extravagance avoided. The same habitation, the same offices, the same utensils, would have served for all; and the accommodations afforded by the Oracle, would have been competent to any number that could have been sent into it.

Some gentlemen, well informed on the subject, are still of opinion, that a union of the three parishes should be again resorted to, as the best means, with economy, of reducing the poor's rates; and such a measure, if we may judge by the success of it in other places, would, no doubt, be highly beneficial, if conducted on different principles from what have, for a long course of years, been invariably adopted in each distinct parish.

Perhaps the plan of appointing standing overseers in each parish, might be adopted with advantage. The present system of nominating new overseers annually, is attended with great disadvantages, as it rarely happens that the gentlemen, thus as it were rapidly succeeding each other, have time to learn the necessary duties of their office, (among which a perfect knowledge of the characters of the poor, who apply for relief, is not the least) before they are succeeded by others, who are to perform the duties of the office, without being in the least acquainted with the routine of the business.

The appointment of a standing overseer has long been adopted in St. Giles's parish, with such success, under the discreet management of Mr. Harvey, who was elected into that office by the parishioners, that the rates in that parish have been considerably reduced, and are now little more than two thirds of their amount in the other parishes.

The names of many of the streets having been changed in the course of years, their ancient and present appellations will be found in the following list:

New-street, now called Friar-street.

Chapell-hill, Town's-end, Friar's-place.

Old-street, Horn-street.

Wode-street, St. Mary's Butts.

Lurkman's-lane, Hosiers'-lane.

Cattle's-grove-lane, Kate's-grove-lane.

| Orte-lane, -                | - | New-street.                    |
|-----------------------------|---|--------------------------------|
| The Ortes,                  |   | Watlington's-lane.             |
| Orte Bridge,                | - | Blake's Bridge.                |
| Town Ortes, -               |   | Boult's-wharf.                 |
| Rudden-lane, -              |   | Red-lane.                      |
| Sievyer-street,* -          |   | Silver-street.                 |
| Tute-hill,                  | - | North end of Minster-street.   |
| Yield or Guild-hall, -      |   | Hill-hall,                     |
| Sun-lane,                   | - | King-street.                   |
| Cheese-rewe and Fish-rewe,+ |   | Fisher-row.                    |
| Rotten-rewe, † -            |   | West-street.                   |
| Shoemaker's-rewe, -         |   | East side of the Market-place. |
| The Sanctuary, -            |   | South side of Crown-lane.      |
| Gutter-lane,                | - | Cross-street.                  |
| Hythe Bridge,§              |   | High-bridge.                   |
| Back-lane, -                | - | East-street.                   |

Ray mentions, in his Synopsis, a curious plant, called the man-orchis, found in the meadows near Reading; this plant is very rare to be met with, History. but, if I am not misinformed, has been lately found by Mr. Thomas Lamb, a surgeon of this place.

Peat abounds in almost all the meadows to the south-westward of the town; but being supposed inferior in quality to that found in the neighborhood of Woolhampton, very little use is made of it. Mr. John Stephens, of this town, lately opened a pit in one of his grounds, for the purpose of procuring peat-ashes; but the prejudices were so great, among the farmers, in favor of the Woolhampton ashes, that the attempt was found not to answer the purpose.

#### \* The sieve-makers street.

† Before the cheese-fair was removed to the Forbury, it was held in this street, and all the cheese sold, was obliged to be weighed in the town-scales, kept in the wool-hall, now Mr. Farrer's dwellinghouse, to the passage eastward. This street was also appropriated to the sale of fish and gardenage, as appears from the following order, made by the corporation, in the 31st of queen Elizabeth:

" It is this day agreed, by the company present, that all kind of boatmen, as do use this town, shall bring all kind of fish, which they do bring, into the cheese-rewe, alias fish-rewe, except it be all shell-fish, and as for roots, onions, and such like, they maie sell them in their boate, paying toll therefore."

‡ Rewe, derived from the French word, rue, has been corrupted into row, but improperly, as the latter is only applicable to a single line of houses.

& From the Saxon word hythe, a wharf.

In digging for the peat in Mr. Stephens's ground, the workmen found two white rats; one of which they caught, and brought to Mr. C. Toovey, of this town, who kept it several months till it was become partially tame, when it escaped from its prison, and was irrecoverably lost. It was perfectly white, with red eyes, and something smaller than the common rat; but whether a new species, or only a variety, I must leave to naturalists to determine.

At a place called Plum's-grove, adjoining the boundary of the corporation, in digging sand, the workmen discovered several balls of clay, called lusus helmontiæ: these balls were of several sizes, forming a shell of about an inch in thickness, in which was enclosed a nucleus of a black friable matter, in appearance like the filings of iron.

But the greatest natural curiosity discovered here, is the stratum of seasand, at the depth of about twenty yards from the level of Bob's-mount, in Kate's-grove-lane. In this bed of sand, are found a great number of oyster-shells, intermixed with small sharp pointed fishes' teeth. These shells, though perfect when taken out of the ground, if not dried by a slow fire, are apt to crumble to pieces in a short time; but with this precaution they may be kept many years. How they came to be deposited in this place, it is, at this time, impossible to discover with certainty; and little dependance can be placed on the theories, however ingenious in their construction or application, which have been formed, to account for those phenomena, which have for ages been concealed in the bowels of the earth.

By one of these theories, it has been conjectured, that the shells in question were overwhelmed by the hill above them, at the time of the flood: a supposition that has been found very convenient for deciding many difficult operations of nature, of which our confined knowledge can afford no better solution; but, great as the power of water is, I cannot conceive it equal to the task it is here required to perform. That the dry land was covered with water, we are assured from the best authority; but it does not therefore follow, that the sea afterwards became dry land; but supposing it might, in some particular places, this will not account for its former bed being buried, as in this instance, under so large a mass as this hill evidently is, and to which this phenomenon is not exclusively confined; for the same appearances are discovered on digging wells in a north west direction from this spot, as on the top of Castle-street, and at a farm-house in Pig's-green, in the parish of Tile-hurst, where the stratum could no further be traced, from the extent of the hill which rises at this place, and from its height, which prevents the earth

from being explored to a sufficient depth to determine its continuation.\* From the observations already made, it appears certain, that this stratum of sea-sand, abounding with oyster-shells, extends much further than is generally supposed, and is more likely to have been the ruins of another world than the decomposition of this.† We may therefore say with the psalmist,

CHAP. VII.

- "Great and marvellous are thy works, O Lord!
- " And thy ways past finding out."
- \* Among the different theories on this subject, the following, from the Natural History of Oxford-shire, printed in 1677, is perhaps the most extraordinary:
- "Reading having been a town of very great action, during the invasion of the Danes, who cutting a deep trench cross, between the Kennet and Thames, and inclosing themselves, as it were, in an island, held it against king Ethelred and Alfred his brother, a considerable time, from whence, in all probability, the Saxons having removed their cattle, 'tis likely that they might be supplied by their navy with oysters, which, during the time of the abode of the army on land, might be very suitable employment for it: Which conjecture, if allowed, there is nothing more required to make out the possibility of the bed of oysters coming thither, without a deluge, but that Catsgrove was the place appointed for the armies repast".—Plot's Oxfordshire.
- † On digging a well at J. E. Liebenrood's, esq. at Prospect-hill, in Tylehurst parish, at a very great depth from the surface of the hill, the workmen came to a large block of stone, which being with difficulty removed, they found under it a vast quantity of cockle-shells, on a layer of sea-sand: this seems to have been on a level with the shells above mentioned, and which may confirm the idea, that a large mass of extraneous matter had at some time overwhelmed this spot, in the direction above mentioned.

# Town of Reading.

### CHAPTER VIII.

VIII.

CHAP. THE trade of Reading, owing to its situation on the conflux of two navigable rivers, has, from the most distant period, been very considerable. The woollen manufactory, in particular, to which, in some measure, it owes its present consequence, was established here soon after its first introduction into this kingdom by Edward I, in whose reign one Thomas Cole is said to have amassed a very considerable fortune in it, for the time in which he lived.\*

Mr. Kendrick, who was afterwards a great benefactor to this town, was another instance of the success which has attended the manufacturers of Reading, in this branch of business. This gentleman is said to have kept one hundred and forty looms in constant employ, whereby several hundred laborers, such as pickers, sorters, carders, spinners, weavers, dyers, teazers, &c. were comfortably maintained. This trade kept encreasing here, till the reign of Charles I, when it appears to have been considered of so much importance to the kingdom at large, that during the civil war in that reign, the governor having summoned all the clothiers of the town to appear at the town-hall, informed them, that "his majestie granted them full libertie to trade to London, without let or molestation of his majestie or any of his armies, and desired them to obtain the same libertie from the parliament." After which, owing to the shock it had received during the civil war, and to the means provided by Mr. Kendrick for its encouragement and support, but which unfortunately had a contrary effect, it gradually declined, till the beginning of the eighteenth century, or soon after, when it was entirely lost.†

<sup>\*</sup> Mr. Thomas Cole, born in Berkshire, was commonly called the rich clothier of Reading. He is reported to have been a man of vast wealth, maintaining one hundred and forty menial servants, besides three hundred people, whom he set on work, insomuch, that his wains with cloth filled the highway from Reading to London, to the stopping of the king in his progress, who gratified this eminent clothier Cole, with a standard yard, the length of his arm .- Historical Dictionary 1692.

<sup>+</sup> Jan. 6, 1719, a petition was presented to the house of commons, from the mayor, aldermen, burgesses, and clothiers, drugget-makers, &c. of the borough of Reading, in behalf of themselves and several thousands depending upon them .- Votes of the Commons.

<sup>1</sup> Corporation Diary.



Strom the original in the Council Chamber.



As the building now called the Oracle, was eventually the cause of the failure of this manufactory here, it may be necessary to give some account of it in this place, which we shall do, after making a few observations on its present appellation, the incongruity of which must have struck every one who has attended to its present appropriation.

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Mr. Coates, in his History of Reading, supposes it to be derived from Oriolum, a word used by Matthew Paris to designate a porch or entrance, and as there is a large gate-way\* to the Oracle, he conjectures it took its name from this particular. In confirmation of this opinion, he quotes Cowel, who supposes that Oriel college, in Oxford, might derive its name from some such room, or portico, or cloyster. How far the latter may be right in this derivation, I cannot say, but it is certain the disproportioned, and rude gate-way leading into the Oracle, could not have been of sufficient consequence to have given a name to the whole building, even, if we could suppose that the members of the corporation, at its building, had looked into the history of a barbarous Latin author, which nobody reads, for a name by no means appropriate to the use of the house, and that they afterwards corrupted it into Oracle, which has only the two first letters of the original word in its composition.

The difficulty in this case, I conceive, arises wholly from the mistakens orthography of the name, which was probably given to it accidentally, from the principal ingredient used in the dying business; for though the Oracle was intended for the convenience of carrying on every branch of the woollen manufactory, yet it was more particularly so for the business of dying; many of the weavers being allowed to have looms in their own houses, but were obliged to bring all their cloth to be dyed at the Oracle.

Among the articles principally used in the dying business, as then practiced, was a drug originally brought from the Canary islands, called Orchal, but imported into this country from Italy, where it was called Oricello, in Latin Oricola; from either of which, I presume the Oracle might derive its present name. This drug was thought of sufficient consequence to claim the attention of the legislature, as appears from several statutes that were passed

<sup>\*</sup> It is plain that Matthew Paris did not mean the word Oriolum to signify the gateway itself, but rather a hall or room adjoining it. His words are, nisi in refectorio vel oriolo, cum sociis suis pranderet: (unless he should dine with his companions in the refectory or oriolum.) And so, in another place, he says, Ut non in infirmariâ, sed seorsim in oriolo, monachi infirmi carnem comederent: (that the sick monks should not dine in the infirmary, but a-part in the oriolum:) From both which passages, it is plain, he did not mean a porch or entrance, but an eating room; and so he explains it himself, in another place, where he says, Adjacet atrium nobilissimum in introitu, qued porticus vel oriolum appellatur. (At the entrance is a most noble hall, which is called the porch or oriolum.)

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in different reigns concerning it.\* It was of such general use, that there can be no doubt, but large quantities were stored up in some part of the building, which might be called the Orchal-house, and from the frequent use made of the term, be afterwards applied to the whole of the building. This is the more probable, as from whatever cause it arose, it is certain the name now given to it, was wholly accidental, it having, for nearly a century after its erection, been called in the corporation books, the work-house, and so it is styled in archbishop Laud's decree.

This building is crected on the angle that divides Minster-street from Gunstreet. It is of a quadrangular form, inclosing a square court, the longest sides of which are about one hundred and fifty feet, and the shorter, one hundred. The entrance is in the centre of the west front, facing Gun-street, and consists of a square gateway, on the sides whereof are two ionic columns, erected on very slender disproportioned pedestals. In the centre, between the capitals, is a niche, probably intended to receive the statue of the founder; but for what reason this mark of respect was not fulfilled, we have not been able to learn. The two folding oak doors, that enclose the entrance, are loaded with ornaments. On the left hand leaf, is carved the image of a lion, supposed to be Mr. Kendrick's arms; and on the right, I. K. 1628. On the right of the gateway, within the quadrangle, are some alms-houses, and on the south side are the work-shops, formerly occupied by the dyers; this part is built on a narrow slip of land, which is bounded on the north by the Holy-brook, and on the south by the Back-brook; the remainder of the quadrangle consists of work-shops, and on the south-side, behind the buildings, is a large plot of ground, formerly used as a tenter-ground and garden. The whole was exceedingly well adapted for the purposes for which it was intended, and might have been of considerable advantage to the trading inhabitants of the town, had the funds intended for its support, been properly administered.

This building was erected in consequence of the following clause in Mr. John Kendrick's will, in which he bequeathed the sum of seven thousand five hundred pounds, to the mayor and burgesses, in trust, for the benefit of the town, out of which they were to purchase "to them and their successors for ever, a fair plot of ground within the town of Reading, or the liberties thereof,

<sup>\*</sup> Orchal, mentioned in the statutes of Richard III, Henry VIII, and Edward VI, seems to be a kind of coik, or rather stone, like alum, which dyers use in their colors.—Jacob's Law Dictionary.

Others say, it is a kind of moss, growing in the Canaries, called by the Spaniards Orchilla; but whether it was a vegetable or mineral, all agree, that it was used in dying a blue color; and the trifling difference in the sound between Orchal, and Oracle, leaves little room to doubt, but that the latter is a corruption of the former, and, as such, has given the present name to this building.

and thereupon to build a strong house of brick, fit and commodious for setting the poor to work therein; or else shall buy and purchase such an house, being already built, if they can find one already fitting, or that may, with a reasonable sum, be made fit for the said use. The said house to have a garden adjoining, and to be from time to time kept in good and sufficient reparation, by the said mayor and burgesses, for the time being for ever."

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It appears, from the chamberlains' accounts, that this sum was appropriated in the following manner:

| For land in North-street, and for g | roun  | d to  | build tl | ne  | £.   |
|-------------------------------------|-------|-------|----------|-----|------|
| house upon                          | ~     | -     | -        |     | 1900 |
| To Mr. Blagrave, for a garden       | •     | -     | ~        | -   | 32   |
| Amount of several items for bui     | lding | the   | house    |     | 1846 |
| Stock employed in the work-hou      | se    | -     | -        | -   | 3600 |
| Goods bought of Mr. Kendrick        | -     | olite | also .   | un. | 122  |
| For Mr. Kendrick's picture          | cer   | -     | -        | -   | 5    |
|                                     |       |       |          | _   |      |
|                                     |       |       |          | €   | 7505 |

Though the money thus devised, was for the sole use of the poorer class of manufacturers, yet the greater part of it was soon appropriated by the members of the corporation, or disposed of among their friends in the cloathing line, who being enabled, from the capitals they thus possessed, to undersell their competitors in the same line, occasioned such discontents among the inhabitants,\* that, in the fourteenth year of Charles I. they exhibited the following English bill of information, by sir John Banks, his majesty's attorney-general, against the mayor and burgesses, and one James Winch, to whom they had lent, out of this charity, the sum of twelve hundred pounds, on insufficient security:

"Carolus, Dei gratià Angliæ, Scotiæ, Franciæ, et Hiberniæ Rex, Fidei Defensor, &c.

"Whereas, sir John Bancks, knt. his majesty's attorney-general, did heretofore exhibit an English bill of information into this court, against the mayor and burgesses of the town of Reading, in the county of Berks, and against James Winch, and the mayor, comonalty, and citizens of the city of London, thereby shewing that John Kenerick, late citizen and draper of London.

<sup>\*</sup> In 1631, one William Treacher was committed to the Compter, for saying, "He wished the money paid for building the Work-house were thrown into the river."—Comparation Diary.

CHAP. VIII. don, deceased, (amongst others, his pious and charitable works, intending the good and benefit of the said town of Reading, being the place of his birth, and for the continuance and increase of cloathing and other trades, and the help and furtherance of clothiers and other tradesmen in that town,) by his last will and testament, bearing date the nine and twentieth day of December, in the year of our Lord God, one thousand six hundred and twenty four, amongst divers other legacies, did give and bequeath to the mayor, burgesses, and corporation of the said town of Reading, the sum of seven thousand five hundred pounds, to buy and purchase land, of the clear yearly value of fifty pounds by the year, above reprises.

"Which sum of fifty pounds a year should be paid, by the said mayor and burgesses, and their successors, to the overseers of the said town, for the time being for ever.

"And by them the said overseers for the time being, should be bestowed and distributed to, and amongst the poor people of the said town, for ever, according to the necessity of the several persons.

"And if the same should be bestowed contrary to his meaning, or omitted and neglected, and not performed, for the space of one whole year, then the said sum of fifty pounds a year should, by the said mayor and burgesses, and their successors, for the time being, for ever, be paid unto the treasurer of Christ's hospital, in London, and by the governors of the same hospital employed to the relief of the poor children of the said hospital, or else the said mayor and burgesses should convey the said land to the mayor and comonalty, and citizens of London, for the use of the said hospital, to be employed as aforesaid.

"And, that the will and meaning of the said Mr. Kenerick was, that the said mayor and burgesses, of the said town of Reading, with another competent part of the said sum of seven thousand five hundred pounds, should buy and purchase unto them, and their successors for ever, a fair plot of ground, within the town of Reading or the liberties thereof.

"And, thereupon should erect and build a strong house of brick, fit and commodious for the setting of the poor in work therein, or some other house already built for the said use, with a fair garden adjoining, to be from time to time kept in good reparation, for ever, the same to be occupied by such as the said mayor and burgesses, from time to time, should appoint, for the employing and handling of the stock of money by him thereby left and devised to that purpose.

"And that the said land, and house and garden, being purchased as aforesaid, with parcel of the said seven thousand five hundred pounds, then the whole residue and remainder of the said sum of seven thousand five hundred pounds should make and be a common stock, to be employed in trade of clothing, working of wool, hemp, flax, iron, grinding of brazil wood, and other stuff, for dying or otherwise, as to the said mayor and burgesses aforesaid, and their successors, for ever, should seem convenient, for the employment of poor people, and for the preservation and increase of the said common stock.

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"But if the said mayor and burgesses, or their successors, should neglect to perform the premises according to his said will, or should misemploy the said stock, contrary to his true intent and meaning, and such neglect or misemployment should continue at any time for the space of one whole year together, then the whole legacy of seven thousand five hundred pounds to be utterly void, and of none effect, as to the said mayor and burgesses, and their successors, and as to the uses before expressed.

"And that the said whole common stock should be by them, the said mayor and burgesses, for the time being, forthwith paid unto the mayor and commonalty, and citizens of the city of London, according as is before devised.

"And, as well the said lands, as also the house and garden to be purchased, should, by the said mayor and burgesses, be conveyed by their deed, sufficient in law, unto the said mayor and commonalty, and citizens of London, and their successors, for ever, to the like use of Christ's hospital, in London, as aforesaid.

"As, by the said last will and testament, amongst other things therein contained more at large, it doth and may appear.

"Further shewing that shortly after the making of the said will, the said John Kenerick died, and the said sum of seven thousand five hundred pounds was paid, by the executor of the said will, unto the mayor and burgesses of the said town of Reading, for the time being, for the uses and purposes in the said will expressed.

"And that the said mayor and burgesses, finding, that in case of any mis-employment of the said legacy, or stock of money, the said gift unto them to be void, and the benefit thereof wholly transferred over to the mayor and commonalty, and citizens of the city of London, for the benefit of Christ's hospital, have, in that respect, for fear of committing a forfeiture of the said legacy, tied themselves strictly to the employment of the said stock, to the very letter of the said will.

"And with part of the said sum of seven thousand five hundred pounds, which remained over and above what was bestowed in the purchase of the lands, of the yearly value of fifty pounds, have built or purchased a workhouse, with a garden adjoining to it, and furnished the same with implements

CHAP. VIII. for clothing, and have diverted the said sums, or stock, in the hands of several persons (that is to say), into the hands of the defendant, James Winch, the sum of twelve hundred pounds, or thereabouts, and to divers other persons, whose names are as yet unknown to his majesty's attorney-general, and have appointed those persons to employ the said stock in the said houses, who, by that means are enabled to pay dearer rates for their stock, than other poor clothiers of the said town can afford to give, and to sell their cloth at lower rates than the rest can afford to sell at, whereby they have got into their hands the greatest part of the trade of the said town, especially of clothing, and all the rest of the clothiers of that town, which is the greatest number, are for the most part of the poorer sort, and for whose benefit the said legacy was principally intended, are much prejudiced and impoverished, and are likely, by this unequal division of the said stock, to be driven out of their trades.

"And by this means there are not so many clothes made in the said town, by near a third part, as were before the legacy was given, and those worser wrought than formerly they were wont to be, which turns to his majesty's great loss in his customs, and to the decay of trading in that flourishing town, which is utterly against the mind of the said testator, and the scope and intention of his will.

"And some of the sureties who became bound for part of the said stock, upon the delivery thereof, are grown weak in their estates, whereby the said stock may in time be lost and diminished.

"Further shewing the right honorable the lords of his majesty's privy council taking notice of this great and bountiful gift to the said town, and of the ill consequence which had happened, and were likely to grow more and more, by the employment of it in manner as aforesaid, and finding it fit in point of state, that some course shall be set for the remedying of these inconveniences.

"Thereupon their lordships desired the most reverend father in God, the lord archbishop of Canterbury's grace, to take consideration thereof, who, upon examination of the matter, and upon great advisement thereupon, had made certificate to their lordships in these words following:"

## " My LORDS,

"I have, according to your direction, taken advice with Mr. Attorney, and Mr. Solicitor, and Mr. Recorder of London, about Mr. John Kendrick's will, and his great and charitable gift to the town of Reading, for the benefit of clothiers, and other trades, and do therefore propose to your lordships as followeth:

"I find that the stock of Reading, besides the fifty pounds per annum, CHAP. which is already applied to the right use,\* consisteth in two things, a grosssum of money, and a work-house, + for the future employment of it. And, before any thing be done in either, I think it necessary that there be a remission from the city of London, from their pretences, by breach of any condition in the will, and an assent from the town of Reading,

" For the first, which is the sum of money, I find it confessed, that the town makes fewer cloths now than it did before this great stock was given unto it. So the trade decays by the abuse of this money, and the king loseth in his customs; and this decay is near a third part,

"I conceive, this decay comes by unequal divisions of this great stock, by which means, they, which have a greater portion of it, out-bye all the younger and poorer clothiers, for whose benefit principally this stock was given, who are, contrary to the donor's intent, almost undone by it.

"I do further conceive, there can be no safety in keeping this great stock, in money.

" First, because the security given for it may fail, and so the stock in time be utterly lost.

"Secondly, because the will requires an increase of the stock yearly, which I cannot so well like, out of money given to charity.

"Thirdly, because I see some loss like to fall on the stock already, if it be not timely prevented by your lordships' care: for I am informed, from the town, that one James Winch, hath in his hands twelve hundred pounds of the stock; his best security failing, the town hath given him six months warning to bring in better security, or pay the money; yet, he being of kin to the testator, and to divers of the magistrates, doth neither:

"And this I pray, your lordships, may be presently remedied. I am further informed, that divers other parts and portions of this stock are let out upon weak securities, and the cloth made in the common work-house at Reading, (unless it be for those few men that have the great stock in their hands,) is ill wrought, and turns much to the loss of the clothier that way, and hindereth the increase of the stock, which the donor intended. Upon the whole, I think (but with all submission to your lordships' better judgments,) that this great stock, or rather the remainder of it, will never be safe, if it be kept in

<sup>\*</sup> This was an annuity to Mrs. Newman, Mr. Kendrick's sister, on an estate at North-street, Tilehurst, purchased with a part of the legacy.

<sup>+</sup> Since called the Oracle.

The city, on behalf of Christ's hospital, had a reversion of the whole legacy, in case of these management on the part of the corporation.

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money, nor ever put to the right use and benefit of the town, if it be used with all such particulars as are mentioned in the will, for the common workhouse.

"My humble proposal therefore is, that the remainder of this stock, which is about four thousand pounds, may be laid out upon lands, by which means the stock may be safe, and as much in money as now it is; the rent of the lands may be put to the charitable use intended.\*

"The first year's rent may be paid to the town, and kept by them as a stock, to defend the title of the land, should it at any time be controverted, and to repair the work-house; for the defence of which title, and reparation of the house aforesaid, the town shall have power to make stay of a year's rent of the said lands, as often as need shall require, after this one year's rent received to the use above mentioned, and no other.

"Then the town shall, yearly, upon good security, lend out this money, gratis, to men of the town, especially to poor young beginners, and clothiers, in the first place, by fourscore pounds a man, and for ten years, if the parties so long live, and no man to have this loan more than once, but shall, at the ten years' end, deliver in the money to the town; if he die before, then his executors shall pay the money within one year after his decease, that another may make use of it, and so for ever, until it shall appear, by the greatness of the stock, there are not men enough to employ the money. In which case, if by God's blessing, and continuance of time, it so happen, then the four-score pounds, per annum, may be increased to one hundred pounds, or to two hundred pounds a man, and no more, be the stock never so great.

"And, after it is come to two hundred pounds a man, that bank shall continue still in Reading, as the testator intended. But then the yearly proceeds of the land shall go for ever to the binding of poor children apprentice,

\* In consequence of this decree, the sum of 2957l. being part of the then remaining sum of . 3600l. was laid out in the purchase of the following estates:

l. s. d.

For a farm at Sulhamstead, called Brazenhead's, or Paris, 807 11 7
For the Crown Fields, - - 1100 0 0
For a farm at Greenmer-hill, Goring, - 1050 0 0

£. 2957 11 7

† The whole contained about 200 acres, and was let for 173% per annum; which sum, supposing no increase in the rent, during 170 years they have been in possession of the corporation, and without making any allowance for fines, timber, or underwood sold during that period, would, at the present time, if none of the money had been misapplied, or lest from taking insufficient security, amount to the sum of twenty-nine thousand four hundred and ten pounds; which, if lent according to the decree, would have benefitted no less that three hundred and sixty-seven of our poor tradesmen and young beginners.

and the marrying of poor maids, inhabiting in the said town for seven years before, and of honest conversation, at the choice and nomination of the mayor and burgesses; no one receiving above fifty pounds for her portion or gift, with the apprentice, but as much less as they shall think fit.

CHAP. VIII.

"For the second thing, which is the work-house, I would have all the implements therein, belonging to clothing, sold at the best rate, and, with the money, land bought, and the yearly rent of that land employed to set young poor fatherless children to work in some part of that house, upon such handy-crafts as are most fitting for the service of that town.

"And the rest of that house may stand, and be allowed rent free for the habitation of some honest townsmen, that shall teach the younger people their handy-crafts, and keep them to work. And when they have learned their trades, which may be in some good measure by that time they come to sixteen years of age, then they may be bound apprentices, and men will, I conceive, be willing to take them with little or no money, because they will be able to work at the trade the first day they come to their service.

"And, if the said lands purchased with the remainder of the money do exceed the rent of one hundred and three score pounds, per annum, then the surplusage may be converted to the further maintenance of trade in the said house.

"And I do the rather desire the house may stand, and be thus employed in public service, that the donor's name may the better be kept in memory, for this great and charitable bounty to the town, the place of his birth and first education."

This decree was confirmed in the 14th of Charles I, in the court of exchequer, and in part acted upon, though not to the full extent required; about six hundred pounds of the then remaining sum having been diverted from its proper application in the purchase of estates, as well as the sum raised by the sale of the materials.

Nothing particular occurs respecting this charity, during the two succeeding reigns of Charles II, and James II, but, at the commencement of the following reign of William and Mary, the city of London, in the name of the governors of Christ's hospital, who had a reversionary right, by the will of the donor, to the whole of the charity, in case of its misapplication by the corporation of Reading, filed a bill in chancery against them, alleging, that "the defendants, conscious of their mismanagement of the several legacies left in the will, and not doubting but, from their mismanagement, the governors of Christ's hospital were entitled to the whole, for the benefit of the poor boys educated there, did contrive how to prevent the governors taking advantage of the conditions, and, for that purpose, the mayor and burgesses preferred a

CHAP, petition to the lords of the council, by means of the lord archbishop Laud, who had a kindness for the said town of Reading, whereby a decree was made in their favor, by color of which the mayor and burgesses sold the implements for clothing, and disposed of several sums of stock and proceeds to their own and friends' uses, and employed the stock, or great part of it, to other uses than were directed by the will, and received the profits of the purchased lands, and increase of the stock, and employed them to their own uses."

However, fortunately for the poor of the town, notwithstanding the allegations in the bill were of such a nature as not easily to be disproved, the archbishop's decree was confirmed by the lord chancellor, after a long and close examination of witnesses, and inspection of all the books and writings of the corporation, relating to the subject. By this decree, the reversionary right of Christ's hospital, in case of the mismanagement of the trust by the corporation, appears to be abolished, and the whole management of the charity henceforward entrusted to the existing corporation, without any apparent responsibility or risk of forfeiture.

During the civil war, the Oracle was converted into a barrack for the soldiers; after which it reverted to its former use, till the beginning of the last century, when a part of it was appropriated as a work-house, for the poor of the three parishes; but, that scheme not succeeding, it has ever since been applied according to the decree, for the use of manufacturers residing in the town: but so unfortunate has the donor been, in the means he took to serve the inhabitants, that this building, instead of a benefit, has ever been an injury to the greater part of the industrious manufacturers, while only a few favored particulars could be advantaged by it.

We have already seen, that it was the first occasion of the ruin of the woollen manufacture in this town, by enabling such as could obtain its advantages to undersell those who were not so fortunate. The same complaints still exist, and will continue to do so, as long as the same causes shall remain. The best way, perhaps, to remove the present complaints and jealousies among the rival tradesmen, would be, to exclude all parties from partaking of its benefits, by converting it to some other use; or, the whole might be disposed of, and the interest of the money arising from the sale, which would no doubt be considerable, might be applied, according to the decree, to the use of the poorer tradesmen, without interest, for a term of years.

Among the manufactures carried on at present in the Oracle, is one for the making of pins, belonging to Mr. Henry Deane, which furnishes employment for many of the industrious poor, as well here as in their own houses,

particularly in the heading part, which is principally performed by children, by means of an engine worked by the foot.

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There are also several manufactories here for the making of coarse linen, such as, sheeting, sail cloth, floor cloth, and sacking goods; but this place not being sufficient to accommodate all the trade, such as could not procure rooms here, have opened manufactories of the same kind, in various parts of the town; one of these, in Kate's-grove-lane, belonging to Mr. Musgrave Lamb, has been established here upwards of a century, and is remarkable for the strength and whiteness of its sail-cloth, owing to a peculiar process the yarn is exposed to in boiling before it is woven. There are said to be about 140 looms employed here in this trade only, some of which are capable of weaving cloths six or seven yards wide. The sail-cloth made here is purchased by government for the use of the navy, and by the East India company.

There is a gauze manufactory here, containing 109 looms, which find employment for a great number of men, women, and children, in the making of gauze, crapes, muslinets, and plain and figured silk dresses, some of which are from eighteen to sixty inches broad. This manufactory has suffered a good deal by the American embargo and non-importation acts.

There are several other manufactories in the town; among which are two for the making of ribbons, hat-bands, shoe-strings, &c. which are carried on to a great extent; in all of which a great number of the poor are employed: but the usual consequencies attending the establishment of these manufactories, in causing a great increase in the poor-rates, have been experienced in this town, in common with other places where they have been carried on to any extent.

The articles of exportation from this town, are, flour, of which about twenty thousand sacks are sent annually to London; but this quantity naturally varies, according to the fertility of the season. Malt is likewise a considerable article, though it has much decreased of late years: the present average quantity may be about ten thousand quarters. Wheat, beans, pease, oats, and every species of seeds are likewise exported; but this trade depends very much on the variation of the markets: in favorable seasons, great quantities are sent to London and other places; but when there is a deficiency in the crops, the importation of corn from London becomes equally considerable.

Besides corn and flour, the principal articles of exportation are, timber, bark, straight hoops, linen, wool, cheese, beer, and a variety of minor things, chiefly for the London market; from whence are imported grocery of every kind, iron, spirits, fir timber, deals, staves, Portland stone, bricks, hemp, flax,



corn, hides, leather, coals, &c. these are conveyed in barges from 60 to 128 tons burthen; the last article formerly amounted to between five and six thousand chaldrons annually; but this quantity is now very much reduced, owing to the introduction of pit-coal by the Oxford canal, in boats of 25 tons burthen. The Thames and Severn canal also having joined the Isis at Letchlade, whereby a communication by water has been made as far as Brimscombe-port, Bristol, and part of Wales, the trade has, in some instances, quitted its former channel, and gone this way: but the articles of export and import are not very numerous; the former, consisting chiefly of peat-ashes, corn, woollen rags, flints, &c. and the latter of wrought and unwrought iron, Birmingham goods, slate, salt, and coal, conveyed in barges from 40 to 60 tons burthen, making the whole of the export and import trade amount to about fifty thousand tons annually.

A new branch of trade has lately been opened from Bristol and Bath, by means of the Kennet and Avon canals, which promises to be of considerable benefit to this town. At present, the principal articles derived from this channel of communication, are, Bath free-stone, and Somersetshire pit coals; which have been introduced here in considerable quantities.

The river Kennet, from the High-bridge to its junction with the Thames,\* had long been placed, by the authority of parliament, under the management of the Thames' commissioners: but, from some unaccountable neglect, or from their not recollecting their right to interfere out of the direct course of the Thames, this part of the Kennet, so essential to the prosperity of the town, had become not only difficult to navigate, but attended also with so much loss of time, and additional expence to the navigator, as to call loudly for improvement; accordingly one of the agents of the navigation company, in the year 1800, conceived the plan of improving it, by means of a canal to be cut in a straight line along the leather mill stream, and to fall into the old river a little below the present staunch lock, and also to improve the intricate part of the river above the bridge, as far as the pound-lock. Having communicated this idea to some of the proprietors, and particularly to Messrs. Stephens, Harris, and Williams, these gentlemen were so convinced of the utility of the plan, that they immediately took measures for putting it in train,

<sup>\*</sup> It appears, from Doomsday-book, that the river Thames was at that time navigable from Wallingford, downwards, if not through its whole extent, though no doubt attended with many difficulties and delays, from the want of locks, to keep up a sufficient depth of water; for, in the account of Wallingford, king Edward is said to have possessed colxxvi hagæ, reddentes xi lib. de gablo et qui ibi manebant faciebant servitium regis cum equis, vel per aquam usque ad Blidberia, Reddinges, Sudstone, Besintone, et hoc facientibus dabant propositi mercedem aut corrodium non de censu regis sed de suis.

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so as to be proceeded on as soon as an act could be obtained for the purpose, and the supposed sum necessary for its completion, was subscribed in a very short period. But, it having been discovered, in the course of the proceedings, that this part of the river Kennet was, as is said above, under the jurisdiction of the Thames' commissioners, it became necessary to obtain their consent, previous to going to parliament for the bill.

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Accordingly, application for that purpose was made, at the next meeting of the Thames' commissioners, held at Reading, who very willingly consented to wave their right of jurisdiction over their part of the line, to promote the improvement of the whole. This resolution was afterwards confirmed, at a meeting held at Oxford.

In consequence of this uniformity of consent of the commissioners of these two districts, the subscribers were encouraged to proceed in their plan; and, accordingly Mr. Rennie was requested to survey the proposed line, and to deliver in an estimate of the expence; which he did, at the next meeting of the subscribers, when the same was taken into consideration, and unanimously approved of. Nothing now appeared to be necessary, but to make the proposed application to parliament, when two gentlemen, who held navigation bonds to a large amount, put a stop to their proceedings, by bringing the question a third time before the Thames' commissioners at Marlow: at which meeting, the consent given at the former ones was revoked, and it was then agreed, that the canal should be made, under the powers the commissioners possessed, by virtue of an act of parliament already made.

In pursuance of this determination, a canal has been cut, and a pound-lock erected; but, as the powers of the Thames' commissioners did not enable them to interfere with the river above High-bridge, that part of the navigation, by far the most intricate and dangerous, still remains a disgrace to the town, and is likely to continue so, unless the communication now open for water-carriage, from Bristol to London, by means of the junction of the river Kennet, and Kennet and Avon canal, at Newbury, should induce the gentlemen, who are now proprietors of both canals, to form a new line, to unite with the new canal at the Five Bells; which may be done at no very considerable expence, according to the following plan proposed by Mr. Rennie, in the report which he laid before the subscribers:

"The channel of the navigation between the lock and the Bear mead, and the lower end of Mr. Simonds's brewery, is so much occupied with buildings, and the waste and tail waters from St. Giles's mill are so inconvenient, that it is much to be wished, this part could be avoided; and could funds sufficient be raised to defray the expense, I would advise it to be deserted, and

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kept entirely for the use of vessels frequenting the present wharfs, and for evading the floods. St. Giles's mill head may then be taken for the trade, which passes through Reading, a lock formed at the south end of the mill,\* and a new channel cut in a straight line from the tail of this lock to the bottom of the evot below the Plummery ditch. By this scheme, all the narrow, crooked, and inconvenient places would be entirely avoided;† but as the cut would be long, the number of houses to be pulled down, and property occupied, great, and as a new bridge must be built in London-street, and Sevenbridges, I doubt the expence would exceed any possible advantages, that could, in the present state of the trade, be derived from it."

Such was the plan proposed by Mr. Rennie, and the reasons why it was not undertaken at that time; but, as these may not always apply, I conceived that the plan proposed by this eminent civil engineer might be of service to those who at a future period might undertake to perfect this part of the navigation; for the improvement of a town like this, cannot be the work of a day, a month, or a year, but may continue for ages.

Next to the advantages arising from water carriage, are the benefits derived by it to the possessors of large and convenient wharfs; but, in this respect, Reading is very deficient, having few places for landing goods, and those of no great magnitude, if we except such as belong to the Crown-lands, and these, being leased to an under-tenant, it is his interest to monopolize the whole, and make the best use of them he can, for the advantage of his own trading concerns.

In the reign of Edward VIth, we find the corporation were in possession of a wharf, for the benefit of the inhabitants; a person having been at that time appointed, at a salary of four shillings per annum, to superintend "the wharf, wharfage, and the beam." This office continued, as appears from the books of the corporation, till the reign of Charles Ist; at which time, owing probably to the confusion caused by the civil war, this privilege appears to have been lost to the inhabitants; as after that period no such officer is mentioned. This was called the Common Landing Place, and was, I conceive, that part of Mr. Blandy's wharf included between the north east corner of High-bridge, along the river as far eastward as the posts which are the boun-

<sup>\*</sup> It was Mr. Rennie's opinion, that when this end of the mill was taken away, for forming the canal, the remainder might be made to execute more work than it can on its present construction.

<sup>+</sup> Only about sixty poles remain now uncut to complete this plan.

<sup>‡</sup> Even so late as the beginning of the last century, it retained that name, and is so called in the first act of parliament, for making the river Kennet navigable.

<sup>1</sup> Corporation Diary.

dary between the corporation and Crown-lands; this part being still the property of the corporation.

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The repairs of this wharf were made at the expence of the corporation, who, in return, received wharfage for all goods landed there, not being the property of the freemen of the town, but of strangers. This privilege, however, it seems, was sometimes abused, by landing goods under false entries; which occasioned the following bye-law to be made by the corporation, to prevent such abuses for the future.

"It is ordered, that, if any person or persons resident, or to be resident within this borough, shall colorably or deceitfully say or affirm, that any goods or merchandize that he shall traffic, within the city of London, or elsewhere, shall be the goods of any of the burgesses (freemen) of this borough, when in the truth it is not so, to the intent to defraud the wharfinger of his tollage; such person or persons to forfeit, for every time so doing, ten shillings; whereof the one half to be to the mayor and burgesses, the other half to the wharfinger."

Whether the town's-men may have lost this right by prescription or otherwise, we must leave to others to determine; but, in point of equity, the right might still be supposed to exist; as it never appears to have been formally given up, but lost through disuse, or for want of the people's knowing they possessed any such right.

The freemen of this borough were likewise exempted from the payment of tolls in the city of London, as appears from the following agreement, made "between the citizens of London, and the burgesses of this borough touchynge the aunciente freedom and privylege of the major and burgesses to bee free, and discharged of tolle within the saide city.

" Ad curiam in interiore camera Guildhalde, civitatis London, &c.

"In the court, in the interior chamber of the Guildhall, of the city of London, held, on the fifth day of July, in the seventh year of the reign of queen Elizabeth, before those great and respectable men, the lord-mayor and aldermen of the said city of London, among other things, it was agreed,

"That all the burgesses of the town of Reading in the countye of Berks, shall, immediatelie after suche time as this courte shall be trulie certifyed of their names in writing, under the common seale, of their saide town, bee discharged of tolle within this cittye, according to the auntiente allowance of their libertyes to them made by this courte in this behalf.<sup>2</sup>

BLACKWELL."

In addition to the quantity of goods imported and exported from this



place, by water carriage, may be added about one hundred tons, annually, by land carriage, employing several road waggons beside those from Bath and Bristol, which frequently take up or put down goods here, in their passage to and from London.

Here are two weekly markets: one on Wednesdays, chiefly for fruit; the other on Saturdays, for corn, butchers' meat, fruit, butter, eggs, poultry, &c.

The corn market is held in a spacious open piece of ground, of a triangular form, surrounded by elegant shops for the accommodation of people attending the market, who may be supplied here with colonial or manufactured articles, cheaper than in any other town in the county. This particular spot is kept in repair by the corporation; for which they are entitled to take one pint out of each sack, for all the corn sold in the market. This toll is farmed, on a lease for years; the value of which has been considerably increased of late years, owing to the present high prices of corn, in comparison with those of former times.

According to the weekly returns of the average quantity and price of the several sorts of grain sold in this market, in the year 1800, the proportions are as follow:

| Species. | Price per Qr. | QrsWeekly | Ann. Sale,Qrs. | Toll per Ann | Value of Corn | Value of Tolls. |
|----------|---------------|-----------|----------------|--------------|---------------|-----------------|
| Wheat    | 60s.          | 400       | 20,800         | 80grs.       | 62,4001       | 2407.           |
| Barley   | 34            | 350       | 18,200         | 70           | 30,940        | 119             |
| Oats     | 26            | 120       | 6,240          | 24           | 8,112         | 35              |
| Beans    | 37            | 110       | 5,720          | 22           | 10,582        | 40              |
| Pease    | 47            | 70        | 3,640          | 15           | 8,554         | 30              |
| Total    |               | 1050      | 54,600         | 211          | 120.588       | 464             |

The provision market is held in a building lately erected, with two entrances; one opening into the Market-place, the other into Fisher-row. The building forms a long square, consisting of two ranges of butchers' shops facing each other, with a passage between, covered with a roof, or rather awning, raised on pillars, sufficiently high above the shops to admit the light, while it secures the purchasers from the rain. These shops take up one half of the building, lengthways; the other half is, in the same manner, defended from the rain, and has a covered portico, the whole length, furnished with seats, for the market-women, who bring, butter, eggs, poultry, &c. for sale. At the south end of the building is a square open area, for fishmongers' and hucksters' stalls, and next to this, and fronting Fisher-row, is a large square

portico, enclosed with iron gates; and over it, supported on stone columns, is the clerk of the market's house, who is generally one of the sergeants at mace. The corporation receive the stallage, tolls, and rent of the butchers' shops.

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About michaelmas, when the corn-market is at the highest, the number of farmers' waggons, bringing the produce of the country to market, is nearly two hundred per day: some of these return empty, but others carry back stable dung, ashes, chalk, coals, and various retail articles from the shops; but the village shops are chiefly supplied with goods by the higglers' carts, who attend each market day, and some every day for that purpose; these, with the farmers' market carts, frequently exceed the number of waggons.

There is also a weekly market here, for store pigs, very conveniently situated for the purpose, having a communication opening into Friar-street and Broad-street. This is private property; but the corporation receive the toll.

There are four fairs, annually: one on the 2d of February, another on the first of May, a third on the 25th of July, and the fourth on the 21st of September; the three first are chiefly for the sale of horses and cows; but the last is also a statute fair for the hiring of servants, and is remarkable for the quantity of cheese brought from Gloucestershire and Wiltshire; the number of tons differs according to the seasons, varying from three to five hundred, which last it is seldom known to exceed.

Formerly, the cheese fair was held in the Cheese-rewe, now Fisher-row, and when the cheese was sold, it was weighed off at the wool-hall, adjoining, by a person appointed by the corporation for that purpose; but this spot being found too confined, to receive the whole that was brought, with convenience to the buyer and seller, in the year 1697, the following order was made by the corporation, for fixing it for the time to come, in the Forbury, where it is now held:

"Ordered, that the next St. Matthew's fair be kept at the weste ende of the Forbury, from the pathe leadinge towards the King's-meadow, for the selling of cheese and hops; St. Lawrence's church walk for the servants, and the town-hall for the serges.\*" Upon the whole, the situation of the town, and the industry of the inhabitants promises, not only to secure to them their present trade, but affords a prospect of a considerable increase.

<sup>\*</sup> Neither hops nor serges have, for many years, been sold at this fair; the latter, probably, deelined with the woollen manufactures of this town.

## Town of Reading.

CHAPTER IX.

## MISCELLANEOUS.

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THE borough of Reading does not appear to have given a title of nobility prior to the reign of Charles I. when that monarch, in the twentieth year of his reign created sir Jacob Astley, a peer, by the title of baron Astley of Reading; but, this family becoming extinct, his majesty George Ist. created lieutenant-general Cadogan, the friend and companion of the great duke of Peerage. Marlborough, in all his campaigns, a peer, by the title of baron Cadogan, of Reading; who dying without issue, his younger brother Charles, who had been put into the patent, succeeded to the title; from whom the present lord Cadogan is descended.

The manor of Reading originally belonged to the abbots, and after the

dissolution came into the hands of the crown. James I. settled it upon his Manor queen, and afterwards on his son prince Charles, in augmentation of his revenue. At what time it came into the hands of the corporation, is uncertain. The manor is contained within a ring fence of about ten miles in circumference, including in it the manors of Battel and Coley. The manor is confined within the limits of the borough; and, like it, is bounded on the north by the manor of Caversham, belonging to Charles Marsack, esq. on the east, by the manor of Sonning, belonging to Richard Palmer, esq. on the south, by the manor of Whitley, belonging to Mrs. Jennings, and on the west by the manor of Tile-

lord of the manor; who, with the consent of the corporate body, appoints a game-keeper.

The town arms are azure; five maidens'-heads in saltire, the middle one crowned, with the initials E. R. in compliment to queen Elizabeth, who frequently resided here, and contributed by her munificence to raise the corporation to the respectable state in which it has since appeared.

hurst, belonging to John Blagrave, esq. The mayor, for the time being, is

Brown Willis.



MAYOR, ALDERMEN & BURGESSES OF THE Borough of Reading
This Plate of the CORPORATION ARMS is bringly inscribed to the dumen



From this circumstance, it has been supposed that they were indebted to CHAP. her for the whole of their arms; but this supposition is unfounded, as appears from a tablet among the archives of the corporation, preserved in the councilchamber, on which are delineated the same arms, with the exception of the initial letters, and the following testimonial, shewing them to have been of a more ancient date:

"These are the auntiente armes and sele, appertevninge and belonginge to the major and burgesses of the towne and burrough of Reddyng, in the countie of Berks, and at this my present visitation was Edward Butler major; the right honourable Robert earle of Leicester knight of the most noble order of the garter, master of the horse to the queen's majestie, and one of her highnesses privie councel, high stewarde of the towne and burrough; Robert Bowyer, Thomas Aldworthe, Thomas Turner, John Ockham, Robert Filbie, and Richard Watlington, head burgesses, and late majors of the said towne and burrough; John Ockham aforcsaid, stewarde of the courts of the said burrough; which armes I, Clarencieux, kinge of armes, have ratified and continued unto the said major, and burgesses of the towne and burrough of Redding, in the countie of Berks. In witness whereof, I have hereunto subscribed my name, the sixthe of October, 1566.

"WILL HENRY CLARENCIEUX, king of armes."

On another tablet, among the archives, the same arms are depicted, with this inscription under them:

"Insignia natalitia villæ et corporationis de Radynge, in monumentis Collegii Regii Heraldorum, tempore visitacionis ejusdem comitatûs, anno salutis a Christo, 1623; testamur hoc Hen. Chittinge, Chester, John Philpott de rubeo dracone, marescalli, ac deputati Willielmi Camdeni Clarencieux, regis armorum in partibus australibus citra ripam fluvii de Trent."\*

In Ashmole's MS, at Oxford, vol. S51, page 4, is a representation of the arms, with the five heads; the middle one crowned, but without the E. R; underneath is the following certificate:

"These are the arms perteyning to the major and aldermen of Reading, in the county of Berks; and, at this visitation, Thomas Kenton was major, Edward Dalby, esq. steward, William Broxton, sen. George Thorne, Thomas Seakes, Robert Creede, James Winch, Edward Johnson, Thomas Cotes, William Broxton, jun. Robert Terrold, Michael Reading, Thomas Tilliard, and Richard Fellowes, aldermen. In witness whereof I have hereunto set my hand the five and twentieth day of

<sup>\*</sup> The original (natalitia) arms of the town and corporation of Reading, in the archives of the royal college of Heralds, in the time of the visitation of that county, in the year of Christ, 1623. Witness, Hen. Chittinge, Chester, John Philpot rouge dragon, marshalls and deputies of William Camden Clarencieux, king at arms, on this side Trent.

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March, in the seventeenth year of the reigne of our most gracious sovereigne lord Charles the second, of England, Scotland, France, and Ireland, king, defender of the faith, Annoque D<sup>ni.</sup> 1665.

Thos. Kenton, maior."

From the above inscriptions, it is evident that the five maidens'-heads, in the arms, bear no allusion to that virgin queen, but must have been of an earlier origin; though, at this distance of time, we may not be able, to determine, on what occasion they were adopted, or, at what period they were first introduced into the corporation seal.

Where history is silent, we have nothing left but conjecture to guide us in the research of any doubtful circumstance; to that only, therefore, in the present instance, can we apply, to account for the origin of the town arms; and though conjecture alone, may not be quite so satisfactory as written testimony, yet, when founded on probability, it will at least be entitled to some consideration.

The custom of assuming coats of arms, is of a very early date, as well as of general practice, in this country: they were assigned to cities and towns, as well as to individuals, and generally took their rise from some remarkable circumstance that had befallen either; if, therefore, we suppose the insignia in question to have been assumed at an early period; perhaps in a century or two after the foundation of the town, it is probable some remarkable feature in the history of its infancy may lead us to the solution of the difficulty.

Most of the cities and towns in the kingdom owed their beginning to some religious foundation; and this seems to have been more particularly the case with Reading; it having been indebted for its origin to a convent of nuns,\* founded here by Effrida, in the tenth century, but which was soon after destroyed by the Danes, when the nuns were cruelly murdered by these merciless freebooters.† We are not informed of the number of nuns on this foundation, whether five or more; but the circumstances attending their early origin, and subsequent destruction, are sufficient to justify the supposition, that the five maidens'-heads in question were introduced into the town arms from this circumstance, especially when connected with the adjective natalitia, (native) used by the heralds in the second testimonial above recited. If this reasoning be just, we can no longer be at a loss to account for the five maidens' heads, or to speak more properly, nuns' heads, in the arms. Instead, therefore, of the heads

<sup>\*</sup> There is a farm in Tilehurst parish, the property of the reverend doctor Wilder, called Nunhide, which was, probably, part of the possessions of this monastery, as was Battel-farm and manor, near this town.

<sup>+</sup> In the time of William I, this monastery appears, from Doomsday Book, to have remained in ruins.

being dressed with flowers, as they are now depicted, they ought to be restored to their original form of nuns heads veiled, as they no doubt were previous to the compliment paid to the memory of queen Elizabeth, by making her head the centre one.\*

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IX.

The town of Reading does not appear to have been inclosed with a wall at any period, and consequently could never have been a place of any great strength; yet, it is the general opinion, that there was formerly a castle here; and Leland fixes the date of its erection to the period of our Saxon ancestors. "There was (he says) a castelle, in the Saxons' tyme, in this town, and the name of Castelle streat yet remaynithe lying from est to west to passe to Newbyri. But I could not perceive or clerclie lerne wher it stood. But bye all lykely-hood at the west ende of Castelle streat, and as sum think about the place of execution." Afterwards, he adds, "it is very likely that a peace of the abbey was builded of the ruins of it; peradventure it stood wher the abbey was."

This uncertainty, respecting the situation of the castle, seems to have originated from the name given to one of the streets, which has led to the supposition, that a castle had, at some period, existed in its vicinity. But, considering how frequently inns have given names to the streets, wherein they are situated, and that even in this town, three or four instances of this kind occur, it is evident that no certain conclusion can be drawn from this circumstance, that this was the spot where the castle was situated.

If the situation of the castle has been hitherto a matter of great uncertainty, the reality of its existence, or whether there have been one or more fortresses of this kind, still remains to be determined. By some, it is contended, that there never was more than one castle here, which was built by the Saxons, and afterwards occupied by the Danes, when they became masters of the town; while others contend, there was a second, erected by king Stephen, and afterwards destroyed by Henry II. The former of these opinions is founded on the following passage, from Hovedune, as quoted by Leland, in his Collectanea:

" Prædictus paganorum exercitus, &c.

"The Danes marching into Wessex, came to Reading, situated on the south side of the river Thames, in the county of Berks. On the third day after their arrival, two of their leaders, with a part of their army, went on a foraging party; the remainder, in the mean time, being employed in throwing up an entrenchment, between the Thames and the Kennet, on the right hand

Castle.

<sup>\*</sup> I have not found an instance of the E. R. being inserted during the reign of the Stewarts; they were probably, therefore, assumed at the revolution.

CHAP. side of the town of Reading. These were met by Ethelwulph, earl of Berkshire, at a place called Englafield, that is, the field of the English. Here both parties fought with the utmost animosity, till one of the Danish generals being killed, and their army being either routed or destroyed, the Saxons obtained a complete victory. Four days after this battle, king Ethelred and his brother Elfred, having collected their forces, marched to Reading, killing and destroying all before them, as far as the gate of the fortress. (arcis) At length the Danes, sallying out from all the gates, attacked the victorious army; when after a long and bloody battle, the Danes obtained the victory."

From this account of the transaction, it appears, that the Danes defended themselves by means of a fortification of some sort, but not by a castle, in the present sense of the word. Besides, if we consider the very few records that could have remained of this barbarous age, in which history was little known or cultivated, very little reliance can be placed on the testimony of an author who wrote nearly four hundred years after the circumstance is supposed to have happened. Moreover, it is allowed, that the Saxons were not in the habit of erecting castles for the defence of their possessions;\* and, even if they had, Reading could not have been, at this period, of sufficient consequence to have required such a security; for, even when Doomsday Book was compiled, the number of houses was but small, and most of these were little better than ruins.

Perhaps this difficulty may be solved, by an attentive examination of the passage in question, supposing it to be authentic. By it, we learn, that while one part of the Danish army were employed in military operations, the remainder were busied in throwing up entrenchments between the two rivers: but, as this alone would not have been sufficient to have secured them against any sudden attack of the enemy, it is reasonable to suppose, the whole line was strengthened by temporary forts, erected at different distances; this agrees with Hovedune's account, that the Danes issued out of all the gates; many of which there no doubt were, along the whole line of entrenchment; but this could not have been the case, had there been only a single castle, as is supposed, which seldom has more than one entrance. Besides, the Latin word arx, seems to have been used by this author, in a more enlarged sense, for every

<sup>\*</sup> Mr. Agard, treating on the etymology, &c. of castles, says: "I read, in the historye of Normandy, wrytten in Frenche, that when Sweyne, kinge of Denmark entered this realme, againste kinge Alfred, or Alured, to revenge the night slaughter of the Deanes, done by the Saxons of Englande, he subdued all before him, because there were no fortes of Englande, to stop him. And the reason yelded is, because the fortes of England, for the most part, were buylte after the Normans possessed the malme."

kind of fortifications, as may be shewn by many passages in his work; but I shall confine myself to the following:

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The Danes having besieged Rochester, "king Alfred, (he says) obliged them to take refuge in their ships; relicta ibi arce, which they had built before the gates of that city." It is evident, from this passage, the word here used, could not mean a castle, such as is now affixed to that idea, but a small fort at the head of their entrenchments, with which they had surrounded the city.

For these reasons, I am inclined to think, that no such fortified place as a castle, existed here, at the invasion of the Danes; or, if it did, that it could not have been situated on the spot mentioned by Leland, as not even the least vestige of such a building remained in his time; nor has any been discovered since, though great part of the hill has lately been built upon, and the remainder used as a brick ground.

Having thus endeavored to prove, that the general opinion of a castle having been built on this spot, either by the Saxons or Danes, is erroneous; it remains to shew, at what time the one, mentioned by historians to have been destroyed by Henry II. was erected; and to point out, as near as possible, the precise spot; which I cannot better do, than in the words of that eminent antiquary, Mr. Hearne; who, in his preliminary observations on Brown Willis's View of Mitred Abbeys, says, "I cannot now enter upon, or indeed promise, an addition to Mr. Willis's Mitred Abbeys; yet, I cannot pass by one particular, (which I am apt to imagine will be acceptable) and that is, what Leland says, in the second volume of his Itinerary, about the old castle, that was at Reading, in the Saxon times, which is mentioned, in Asser Menevensis, to have been taken, with the town of Reading itself, by the Danes.

"After he has told us, that it is likely it stood at the west end of Castle-street, and, as some thought, about the place of execution; he at last advances another opinion, and that is, that perhaps it stood where the abbey was. I shall not take upon me to determine, which of those opinions is the truest; but this I cannot but remark, that whatever the place be, where the castle stood; it is my own opinion, that a piece of the abbey was built of the remains of it. But some worthy gentlemen, to whom I have mentioned this opinion, are pleased to object against it an observation in Mr. Cambden's Britannia, which is this: Reading vero urbecula sive oppidum, Anglo Saxonice Readyge a Rhea i. e. flumine, vel a Britanica dictione Redin quod filices denotat, quæ affatim hic provenerunt, hodie platearum elegantia, ædium splendore, sua opulentia, et lanci panni texendi gloria, cæteris hujus agri oppidis præcellit, licet maxima ornamenta amisserit, templum scilicet speci-

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osum et castrum vetustissimum. Hoc enim Danos tenuisse prodit Asserius, quum vallum inter Cunctionem et Tamesin ducerent, et in hoc se recepisse quum ad Inglefield ab Æthelwulfo rege fugarentur. Sed Henricus secundus ita illud excidit quod Stephani militibus perfugium esset, ut nihil jam supersit præter nudum nomen in plateå proxima.\*

"Tis likely Mr. Camden thought, that the castle Leland mentions, out of Robert Beccensis, to have been fortified by king Stephen, and demolished by the forces of king Henry the second, was the very same castle spoken of by Asser. But that Mr. Leland is otherwise to be understood; and that firmaverat is here to be taken for erexerat, is plain to me, from the very passage of Robert Beccensis: Soluta est itaque obsidio (saith this historian) qua circa Wallingford ordinata fuerat, rege Stephano Crauenense subvertente. Nam anno præterito familia dueis Henrici, quæ Wallingford incolebat non solum contra jus et fas erexerat apud (\*) Abbatiam Radinges pessumdederat. The castle we see that was demolished, was built at the abbey of Reading. and that it was not the arx mentioned by Asser, I think will be as plain as a thing of this nature can be, from a MS. we have in the Bodleian library, of Robert Beccensis, which is published by du Chesne, not only without any author's name, but likewise very imperfectly; the MS. we have, being as large again as the print; and, for that reason, it was, some years ago, transcribed by me for the use of a gentleman in France. Du Chesne himself supposed the passage was not entire; upon which account he put an asteric before the word abbatiam; and that his suspicion was well grounded, will be undeniably clear from the words themselves, as I have here written them out of the MS, Soluta est itaque obsidio, quæ circa Wallingford ordinata fuerat, Rege Stephano Crauenense subvertente. Nam anno præterito familia ducis Henrici quæ Wallingforte incolebat, non solum castrum Bretwelli, quod diu eos impugnerat, verum etiam castellum quod rex etiam Stephanus contra jus et fas erexerat apud abbaciam Radingis pessundederat."†

<sup>\* &</sup>quot;Reding, a village or town, called by the Saxon Rheadyge, from rhea a river, or from the British redin, fern, which grows in great plenty in its neighborhood; for the elegance of its streets, the splendor of its houses, its opulence, and its manufactories of woollen cloths, excels every other in this county, though it has lost its greatest ornaments, its spacious abbey, and its ancient castle. This, we are told by Asserius, was possessed by the Danes, when they cut a trench between the rivers Thames and Kennet, within which they withdrew, when they were put to flight at Englefield, by king Ethelwulph. But king Henry II, so destroyed it for having been a place of refuge to king Stephen's followers, that nothing now remains but its bare name, in a neighboring street."

<sup>+ &</sup>quot;Stephen having raised the siege of Wallingford, destroyed Crowmarsh. For, in the preceding year, the followers of duke Henry, who resided at Wallingford, had not only destroyed the camp at Britwell, which had long infested their quarters, but also the castle, which king Stephen, against all right, had erected near the abbey of Reading."

"As I take it, there can be no ground for any further dispute, that the CHAP. castle destroyed by king Henry the IId, at Reading, was that erected by king Stephen. And, as I do not expect any doubt upon this account, so I may venture to assert, that it is one of the 115 castles that were built by king Stephen, on purpose to defend his unjust title."

Though I cannot agree with this learned antiquary, in the opinion that a castle existed here in the time of the Danes, which he seems to admit, by adding, "that a piece of the abbey was built from the ruins of the former castle; which I have shewn above to have been nothing more than a fort, or fortified entrenchment; yet, the proofs he has brought of a subsequent castle having been erected, and afterwards destroyed, here, are so convincing, that I cannot help agreeing with him, that the castle at Reading was not only built by Stephen, but was also situated within the confines of the abbey.

The opinion of a castle having been erected here by the Saxons, and afterwards possessed by the Danes, I am inclined to think originated from Leland's visit to this place. He had read, that a castle was formerly here; and not recollecting where it was situated, endeavored to gain the information from the inhabitants, who could only inform him, that there was a street in the town which probably derived its name from such a building, from whence he conceived, it might have been situated on the rising ground, at the south-west end of that street; but, being afterwards told, perhaps by the monks, with whom he resided, while here, that they had a faint tradition of such a building having stood within the precincts of the abbey, he adds, " peradventure it stood where the abbey was." Camden, who generally copies this author, gives nearly the same account, only thinking, perhaps, the original word arx, would not bear him out in the assertion, or probably quoting the passage from memory, he substitutes castellum for it; a word of a more confined sense, and generally used to express, what is now understood to mean a castle. An authority, coming from so great a man, was sufficient to establish the opinion which has ever since been followed, without the least suspicion of its being erroneous.

From this discussion of the question, it is, I think, very evident, that the opinion which seems to be supported only by hearsay evidence, and conjectures, derived to Leland during his visit to this place, of a castle having been here during the heptarchy, is totally void of foundation; and that, consequently, no such building ever did exist on the spot mentioned by him, nor could have given a name to the street, as he supposes; and that the only castle in Reading, whose real existence is supported by historical evidence, was that built by king Stephen, and was, without doubt, situated within the confines of the abbey.

CHAP.

To this place, therefore, we should turn our attention, if we wish to discover the precise spot on which this castle stood, which can only be done, by tracing out its vestiges, if any such still remain. To do this, I have examined with attention, every part of these noble ruins, their uses and connections with the principal building; and after weighing every circumstance, am induced to believe, that the remains of this celebrated castle are still in existence, and that it was erected on the south-east corner of the Forbury, near Blake's-bridge, within the precincts of the abbey, but at a distance from, and consequently forming no part of the original building. These ruins are very much dilapidated, but they evidently appear to have been intended for a place of defence.

From the ruinous state of this structure, it is difficult to trace its original form, but I conjecture it to have been a square building, with projecting towers at the four corners. The side next the river, the only one now remaining, was about 60 feet in length, and had a square tower at each end, projecting a small distance before the front wall. That at the south-east corner\* has been lately removed, for the purpose of mending the foot-way on the bank of the river, but the other has two of its sides almost perfect. The slope of the hill has been scarped away from the water's edge, to the height of about twenty feet; this is faced with a strong perpendicular wall of flints, on which this tower is erected, and is about fifty feet high, from the level of the water, to its summit; the top seems to have been finished with battlements, but these are so covered with ivy, that it is impossible to discover with certainty, whether they are really such, or rather the remains of the broken wall. In the side walls, still remaining, are loop-holes, some of which front the river, the others command the space between the towers, in front of the building. These towers were admirably well situated, to command the river and the bridge, which was the only entrance on that side of the town to the abbey. The loop-holes had a double purpose, that of giving light to the interior of the building, and for the emission of arrows, and other missile weapons; as a proof of which, they are carried through the wall in an inclined plane, whereas, had they been intended to convey light only, they would have been horizontal; in which case, the garrison would not have been able to have molested, or even seen the besiegers below, the walls being at least three feet thick +

\* See plate XI. fig. 1.

foodwin's description of ancient castles, corresponds with the appearance of this building, as far as its remains will enable us to judge. "The projector," he says, "always chose for the site of his edifice, a rising ground, in the neighborhood of a river. Having marked out the limits of his inclosure, he then surrounded it with a wall, ten or twelve feet high, flanked with towers. The apartments were very inadequately lighted, those below the story, upon which the state rooms were placed, received the beams of the sun, only through chinks or loops, extremely narrow, and cautiously constructed, in such a manner, as to afford no advantage to the besiegers.—Godwin's Life of Chaucer.





Sir Henry Englefield has not noticed this building in his plan of the abbey, as from its distance it evidently could not have formed any part of that structure; besides, from the materials with which these buildings were erected, there can be no doubt of their having been the work of different ages; for though both are cased with flints, the inside walls of the abbey are chiefly composed of the ruins of a former building, while those of the supposed castle are wholly filled with chalk, without any materials of a different nature. For these reasons, I am inclined to think, that these ruins formed a part of the castle built by Stephen, and were partially destroyed in the reign of Henry II.

In questions that involve in themselves much difficulty, we can only decide from circumstances; and, as in the present instance, we have all that can be required to form our judgment upon, independent of positive facts, I hope the conclusion I have drawn, from the above premises, will not be considered extravagant, nor the investigation of the question wholly useless, as it tends to elucidate a part of our history hitherto involved in doubt and obscurity.

Prior to the establishment of standing armies, the defence of the town Military. was entrusted to the trained bands, or what was denominated the posse comitatus, who were called out by the magistrates on any appearance of riot or disturbance. They were regularly summoned once a year to attend the court-leet, and the magistrates were authorised to fine such as did not appear at the time appointed; this gave rise to the custom of granting exemptions, by which those who could not, or did not wish to attend the general muster, were excused on paving a small fine. After the muster, they were regularly trained to the use of the long bow, by shooting at butts set up in each parish. Those for St. Mary's, were in the street now called St. Mary's Butts: St. Lawrence's were sometimes in the Forbury, and sometimes in Caversham-lane, as it was then called: and St. Giles's in Horn-street.\*

If men were wanted for foreign service, a requisition was made of a certain proportion of each district, according to the number of its inhabitants, or the emergency of the case; thus, in the reign of Edward III. while the war was carrying on in France, this town was assessed at twenty men, according to the following abstract of the number of men raised at this period by some of the principal cities and towns in the kingdom:

<sup>\*</sup> Though the trained bands are no longer assembled, the constables still summon the junior inhabitants to the court-leet, and, under the pretext of exempting them from personal attendance, extert from them a penny, which the recorder claims as his fee, but is generally expended by the constable, on a supper.

CHAP.

| Men.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           | Men.           |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------|
| London, 1000                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   | Reading, 20    |
| Norwich 120                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    | Lancaster, 15  |
| Bristol, 60                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    | St. Albans, 15 |
| Oxford, 30                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     | Abingdon, 10   |
| Winchester, 30                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 | Rochester, 10  |
| Gloucester, 20                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 | Maidstone, 10* |
| Worcester, 20                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |                |
| , and the second |                |

In the year 144?, the 20th of the reign of Henry VI. this borough was summoned to provide thirty men for the king's defence, at their own expence; for which purpose ninety of the principal inhabitants were divided into classes; each class was to provide one man at their common expence. At the head of the classes was Mr. William Justice, who alone found two men, and two other rich proprietors who provided three men between them. The small number among whom the expence of levying this force was divided, shews the borough to have been very inconsiderable at that period, in comparison with its present state of population.

In the 34th of Henry VIII. (1543) this borough was ordered to raise twenty-four horse soldiers, to be sent into Scotland. On this occasion, the expences of the men and horses were paid by sixty persons only. Of these, the mayor paid for "half a horse and his apparell: the three vicars, half a horse each, without the harness;" and the remainder were provided by the different classes into which the whole number were divided. The expences for the harness were in like manner divided among ninety-two inferior house-holders, making together one hundred and fifty-two persons on the assessment; nearly one third more of this description than were assessed in this town at the former period.

In the following year, the town was ordered to provide twelve men and horses, and twenty foot soldiers, to attend the king then going with an army into France; and, in 1553, they were ordered to send "ten soldiers well garnished and weaponed," to the assistance of queen May, who was then asserting her right to the succession, of which she had been deprived by her brother's will.

In the third year of this queen's reign, they were again required "to send forty men to attend her person, well appoynted, in blew coates, wythe red dressyngs, that cost six shyllings and four pence a coate, with forty new

<sup>\*</sup> Montifiori's Commercial Dictionary.

\* Corporation Dury. 2 Ibid. 3 Ibid.

bills, that coste eighteen-pence a bill, all whyche was payde for by the inhabitants." This is the first instance of the military of the town being clothed in an uniform.

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From this period, we have no record of the number of men furnished by the town; indeed the practice, adopted in the succeeding reigns, of keeping up standing armies, has rendered the former custom unnecessary; and, as these consist of men raised by enlistment, as well as by ballot, the proportion afforded by this town cannot at present easily be ascertained.

At the commencement of the last war, when parties ran high, and dangerous opinions were disseminated, by the disaffected, among the lower class of people, tending to produce those scenes of anarchy and insubordination that had overwhelmed France, and overturned the throne of the Bourbons, it being thought necessary, for the safety of the country, to raise volunteer corps in most of the principal towns in the kingdom, this borough raised two companies, commanded by Henry Deane, esq. and the following officers:

Martin Annesley, esq.

John Wilmshurst, esq.

John Stephens, esq.

John Deane, esq.

Thomas Cowslade,

Jonathan Tanner,

Thomas Lamb, Surgeon.

Both the officers and men received pay from government, but the expences of the men's uniforms were paid by public subscription.

In the year 1798, when the unparallelled successes of the French had paralized all Europe, and obliged most of the powers on the Continent, to sue for peace, from the directory at Paris; that nation, under whatever form of government, always envious of the superior industry, wealth, and commerce of this country, and enraged by the opposition made to their inordinate ambition, by the skill and courage of our soldiers and seamen, during the war, turned their attention to the means to be adopted, for the invasion of England. For this purpose, the plunder of Holland, Germany, and Italy, was expended in fitting out a fleet, for the conveyance of the troops to this country, with which their coasts were lined, from the Texel to the Seine, and, to add to the insult, the troops were arrogantly stiled, the Army of England.

On this occasion, the system of volunteer enrolments was again resorted to, as the most expeditious means of raising a defensive force, sufficient to

repel the invaders, should they attempt to disturb the peace of this happy country, by putting their insolent threats into execution; and, whether it was owing to the danger being considered more imminent than on the former occasion, or men's minds were better reconciled to military habits, by custom, which reconciles us to every change, certain it is, there was at this time no backwardness in the formation of a very respectable corps, from among the principal inhabitants, who were no longer averse from taking the ranks, and performing the duties of common soldiers, at their own expence. The number originally enroled, was about two hundred, but they seldom mustered more than one hundred and fifty. They were divided into three companies, the grenadiers, centre, and light infantry, with the following officers:

Thomas Newbery, esq. captain commandant.

Their uniforms were blue, with scarlet facing, caps, and helmets; they were provided with an excellent band of music, and a pair of elegant colors, presented to the corps by a lady, since deceased; the one, the union, the other the town arms, encircled by a wreath of laurels, with the motto, God save the King; the whole elegantly embroidered by Mrs. Jesse.

On the 26th of July, 1799, these corps, with all the other volunteer corps in the county of Berks, were reviewed by his majesty, on Bulmarsh heath, and afterwards received his thanks, for the correctness with which they had performed the different manœuvres of an army.

On this occasion, they were drawn up in the following order, according to their seniority; the cavalry forming the two wings, and the infantry the centre:

|            | CAVALRY. |   |   |         |      |                          |
|------------|----------|---|---|---------|------|--------------------------|
|            |          |   | 0 | ficers. | Men. | Commanders.              |
| Abingdon . |          | • |   | 1       | 33   | T. Goodlake, captain.    |
| Maidenhead |          |   |   | 3       | 26   | J. Law, ditto.           |
| Newbury .  | 0        |   |   | 2       | 34   | Richard Townsend, ditto. |

#### INFANTRY. Commanders. Officers. Men. Wantage . . 40 G. Garrett, lieutenant. Reading, without pay T. Newbery, captain. 121 Windsor . . . . W. Highmore, ditto. 56 Wallingford . . . 86 E. Wells, ditto. Maidenhead 45 G. Vansittart, ditto. . . E. Sheppard, ditto. Newbury 104 J. Webb, ditto. Wokingham . . . 52 W. Ward, ditto. Faringdon 40 . . . . Abingdon S. Sellwood, ditto. 96 Reading, with pay 97 H. Deane, major CAVALRY. Rt. Hon. H. Addington, captain. 3 54 Woodley 1 17 John Croft, ditto. Thatcham Hungerford . . 3 19 John Pearce, ditto. Making a total for the county, of 183 horse, and 737 infantry.

From this return, made by the lord lieutenant of the county, it appears, that the number of men raised in this town, independent of those included in the Woodley cavalry, more than doubled those of Newbury, which is the next highest return in the whole list.

After the peace, concluded at Amiens, in 1801, these corps were dissolved, and the Reading colors suspended in St. Lawrence's church, as a memorial of the loyalty and patriotism of the inhabitants, who flattered themselves they should never again be called upon to take up arms in defence of their dearest rights; but the unbounded ambition of Buonaparte, then first consul, soon blasted these expectations, by goading this country, by his insolence and oppression, once more into the horrors of war. The threat of invasion was again resorted to; and that this might not appear an empty menace, every city and town in France, situated on navigable rivers, was ordered to build flat-bottomed boats, for the purpose of conveying his troops to this country, who were again denominated the Army of England. The troops were encamped on the shores of the opposite coast, and every preparation made for putting his threats in execution, that art could contrive, or malice suggest. In this situation of the country, it was thought advisable again to have recourse to the volunteer system, which had been so serviceable on the former occasion, and accordingly both the Reading corps were revived, and increased; those receiving pay, were formed into four companies, amounting together to nearly two hundred; and

CHAP. the other, called the Loyal Reading Volunteers, into eight companies, consisting, in the whole, of nearly five hundred effective men.

These corps were commanded by the following officers:

### VOLUNTEERS.

Martin Annesley, esq. major commandant.

# Captains.

John Wilmshurst.

John Stevens.

Jonathan Tanner.

Henry Marsh, esqrs.

### Lieutenants.

Thomas Cowslade.

Richard Richards.

William Williams, jun.

Robert Boyle Deane.

James Douglas, M.D. Jacob Newbury.

### THE LOYAL VOLUNTEERS.

Thomas Newbery, esq. lieutenant-colonel commandant.
Samuel Swinfen, esq. lieutenant-colonel.
W. B. Simonds, esq. major.

William Pilkington, esq. adjutant.

# Captains.

W. B. Moreton.

Thomas Gleed.
W. Blandy.

W. Watlington.
Robert Harris.
John Blandy.

Rev. E. Valpy.

## Lieutenants.

Charles Benwell. Thomas Wilsdon,
William Parkins. John Goodwin.
William Truss. John Moore.
Thomas Bath. James Sanderson.
John Lamb. G. W. Joplen.

### Ensigns.

Thomas Hallows.

Richard Poulton.

Blackall Simonds.

William Stephens.

Robert Palmer.

Benjamin Moore.

David Legatt, quarter-master.

Thomas Stokes Salmon, M. D. physician. Richard Sherwood, surgeon.

Reverend Richard Valpy, chaplain.

On the 8th of June, 1805, the volunteers of the county were again reviewed CHAP. by his majesty, on Bulmarsh-heath; when he was pleased to express "the particular gratification he felt, in having thus witnessed the military perfection of his Berkshire volunteers."

These corps were dissolved, as soon as the danger of the threatened invasion was removed, and most of the men, with some of the officers of the first battalion of the Reading volunteers, having offered to serve in the local militia, about to be raised, in 1808, were embodied in that regiment, commanded by the

Right honorable the marquis of Blandford, lieutenant colonel.

John Wilmshurst, and H. Marsh, esqrs. majors.

J. Tanner, R. Westbrook, and R. Richards, esqrs. captains.

W. Robinson, T. N Truss, T Ward, and E. Phillips, lieutenants.

W. Gunnell, and M. Robinson, ensigns.

W. Winkworth, adjutant,

J. Bulley, surgeon.

F. Cowslade, quarter-master.

# Schools.

### CHAPTER X.

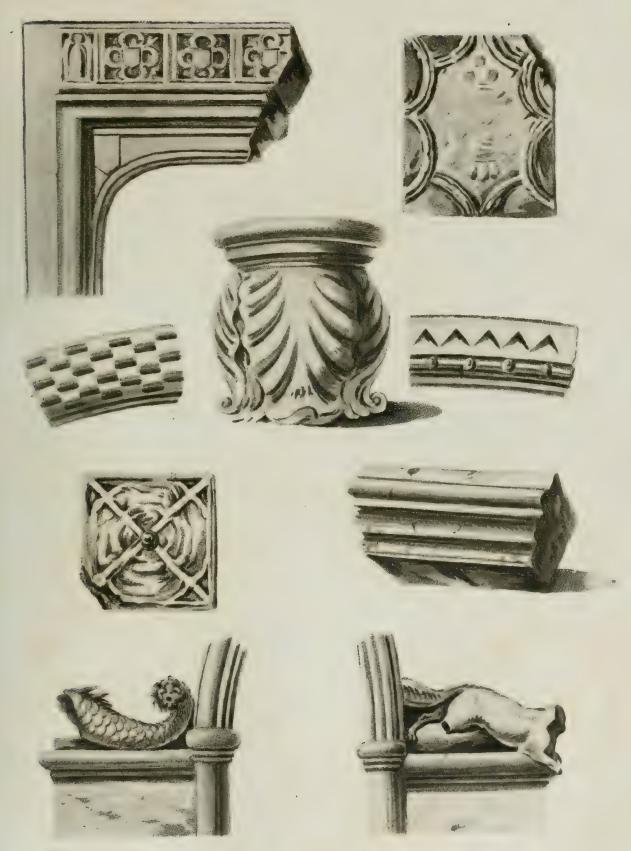
# FREE-SCHOOL.

Снар.

IN the year 1445, according to Leland, John Thorne, the then abbot of the monastery of Reading, suppressed an old alms-house for poor sisters, which had, probably, been founded by one of his predecessors,\* and employed the revenues thereof, to the use of the almoner; but Henry VII, being here soon after, was offended with the abbot, for converting the funds of a religious house, to purposes so foreign to the intentions of the donor, and ordered him to settle the house and lands on some charitable establishment. In consequence of this intimation from his majesty, the abbot made it a free grammar school, in which he was seconded by one William Dene, an officer in the abbey, who gave two hundred marks towards the advancement of the foundation, as Leland collected from his tomb in the abbey church; how this money was applied, is not known, but after the dissolution, the sum of ten pounds per annum, was paid to the master, by the crown, but in the reign of queen Elizabeth, the corporation undertook to pay the master's salary, in return for certain lands bestowed on them by her majesty; and in return they were authorised, by their charter, to nominate, elect, appoint, and remove the master, at their discretion. In the subsequent reign of Charles I. archbishop Laud, by his will, increased the master's salary, to thirty pounds a year. † This was all the emolument the master received from this institution, except, perhaps, a free gift annually, from the parents of the children, which was afterwards converted into a regular quarterage, but I believe this never exceeded five shillings, previous to the middle of the last century.

<sup>\*</sup> This hospital for poor sisters, is not mentioned, I believe, by any author, prior to Leland, who does not mention when or by whom it was founded. There was an hospital here, for lepers, founded by Aucherius, and another for strangers and pilgrims, by Hugh. It is possible one of these might have been converted to this purpose, but of this we have no certainty.

<sup>+</sup> The farm at Bray, in this county, given by archbishop Laud, to the corporation, for this and other purposes, having been lately let at an increased rent, the master's salary will, in future, be considerably increased.



Fragments of various ornamental parts of the Abbey.



**X**.

At the school-meeting, held at the Bear inn, in the year 1771, "it was unanimously agreed, to forward a subscription, in order to raise a fund towards purchasing or building a house, for the master of the free-school, for the time being, and to invest the principal in the trustees, appointed by archbishop Laud, to be visitors of the school, and the mayor of Reading for the time being, who were empowered to receive the interest of the said principal, so to be raised, 'till a house could be either purchased, or built therewith." With the sum collected on this occasion, and some additional subscriptions in 1785, the house, situated at the south-west corner of the Forbury, wherein the masters of the school had lately resided, was purchased of the late doctor Addington, and annexed to the school. Previous to this house being purchased, the masters provided their own residence, and the one here alluded to, was built by Mr. Hiley, about the commencement of the last century, for the accommodation of his boarders; prior to which, it is doubtful if any other boys, than natives, or sons of the inhabitants, were educated in the school, as the former masters seem mostly to have resided in private houses, or lodgings, and no prior mention is made of boarders.

There are two scholarships in St. John the Baptist's college, Oxford, belonging to this school, founded by sir Thomas White, in 1557, concerning which I find the following particulars, in the statutes of the college, drawn up by himself:

" De qualitate et circumstantiis, &c.

" Of the qualifications and circumstances of the scholars to be elected.

"Seeing that there is nothing in the whole society of man more divine; nothing more analogous to our nature, than to be liberal and bountiful towards those, to whom we conceive ourselves most beholden. Neither are we tied by stricter bonds of friendship to any, more than to the citizens of London; among whom we have been, not only long conversant, and brought up almost from our infancy, but but also have attained and gotten the greatest part of such goods and commodities, as now, by divine permission, we enjoy. Wherefore, being moved with that love and piety, which we bear towards our fellow citizens, we do appoint, ordain, and will, that forty-three of the poorer scholars, who, either within London, or the suburbs thereof, shall bestow their time diligently in grammar, may be admitted into this our college, founded and endowed at our costs and charges, and they shall enjoy all such advantages, as the present scholars possess.

" Also, each of the following schools, viz. Coventry, Bristol, and Reading, shall send two scholars, who shall partake of the same advantages and privi-

<sup>\*</sup> Sir Thomas Whyte was mayor of London in 1553.

CHAP. leges, as the others enjoy. One, also, shall be chosen out of Tunbridge school, X., in the county of Kent.

"And now, to the end that there may be some certainty appointed, concerning the nominating and electing of these seven scholars, whom we will have equal to the others, in all the advantages and privileges of the college.

" As often as any place of these seven shall become void, we will, that within forty days after such vacancy, that the president and fellows shall certify and advise, by letters, signed with their own hands, the mayors and aldermen (prætores et seniores)\* of those places, out of which such scholars are to be named and chosen, that is to say, Coventry, Bristol, Reading, and Tunbridge, out of which two scholars each are to be elected, except out of Tunbridge, from which, out of respect to the great love we bore to sir Andrew Judd, knt. founder of the grammar school there, we do ordain and will, that one scholar shall be nominated and elected, as often as the place assigned for this school shall be void. And they shall take care to send such out of their schools, to the college, as either they themselves shall know, or in the judgment of others, shall believe to be fit to learn logic (ad dialecticam percipiendam). And we do decree, ordain, and will, that this nomination, assignation, evocation, and election, of forty-three scholars, and six choristers, by the worshipful men, the master, wardens, and assistants, and the president, and vice-president, and two of the chief senior fellows; and also, the nomination, evocation, and election, of those seven scholars, by the mayors and aldermen of those places, of which we made mention before, be made and kept for ever; neither shall it be lawful at any time, for the president and fellows, which now are, or for their successors, to invert, change, break, or weaken the form of electing scholars, which-we have prescribed, nor to expound, or interpret otherwise than the true, natural, and grammatical sense of the words do bear, under pain of expulsion out of the college; neither shall they at any time consent, either in word or deed, to them that do otherwise."

Though the words of this statute are plain and easy to be understood, yet a dispute originated a few years back, between the master, and some of the members of the corporation, whether a boy, who had been educated as a boarder in the school, without being a native of the town, was eligible to the scholarship.

As the issue of this dispute involved the general interests of all the inhabitants, it was thought fit to take the opinion of counsel upon it, and the following case was drawn up:

<sup>•</sup> Seniores, is used here in a general sense, for the chief magistrates of all the places mentioned, and when applied to those of Reading, which at this time consisted only of the mayor and burgesses, must be considered to mean the burgesses only.

" During the government of John Thorne, who was elected abbot of CHAP. Reading, in 1445, he suppressed an old alms-house of poor sisters, near St. Lawrence's church, founded by some of his predecessors, and employed the revenues to the use of the almoner of Reading, which Henry the seventh being informed of, at his coming to Reading, he ordered the abbot to convert both the house and lands to pious uses; upon which, the abbot begged it might be made a grammar school; which being assented to, one William Dene gave two hundred marks towards its advancement; but the abbot dying soon afterwards, in 1486, and the second of Henry the seventh, the settlement was not completed. This abbot was succeeded by another of the same name, who died in 1519, and was succeeded by Thomas de Worcester, who governed but for a short time, for in 1520, Hugh Farringdon, the last abbot, was elected, and executed at Reading, in 1533.

Case.

"The first charter,\* that appeareth to have been granted to Reading, was in the second year of Henry the seventh, and is dated at Mayfield, August 5th, 1487; about which time it is believed, that the corporation erected their townhall, on the said ground, leaving the under part of it for the said grammarschool.

"Hugh Farringdon, the last abbot, and his predecessors, 'till the act of suppression in 1539, were seized in fee, to them and their successors of the said borough, and of divers messuages, lands, tenements, and hereditaments, within the same; which, by virtue thereof, and of the surrender of the monastery, reverted to the crown. Henry VIII granted a charter to Reading, + in the 37th year of his reign, dated at Portsmouth, July 5, 1546; and at his death, the said borough, and the possessions within the same, descended to Edward the sixth, who died, seized thereof; and it likewise descended to queen Mary, and from her to Elizabeth, who, by letters patent, the 23d of September, in the second year of her reign, viz: in 1560, reciting shortly, the charters of Henry the seventh, and Henry the eighth, granted the said borough, and the said estates, to the corporation of Reading; and, in consideration thereof, they are liable to several public charges, among which, they are to find a schoolmaster for ever, to teach grammar, within the said borough.

<sup>\*</sup> In this charter the corporation are stiled mayor and burgesses.

<sup>+</sup> Incorporated by the title of the mayor and burgesses, of the guild of merchants of Reading, which was a community of such inhabitants who dealt in merchandize, combined together into one body, by royal permission, and every trading inhabitant was, or might be, free thereof.

<sup>#</sup> The rents of the estates then amounted to only about 411. 9s. 7d. annually, but since that time they have been considerably increased, though no other bounty has since been given by the crown to the corporation.

Силр.

- Queen Elizabeth, by her charter of the 23d of September, 1560, incofporated them, by the title of mayor and burgesses; and says, that nine men, of the most discreet inhabitants of the borough, shall be primary and head burgesses, and they shall choose twelve more inhabitants, called secondary burgesses; and the mayor chief, and secondary burgesses shall be called a common council of the borough, for all things and business, or the rule and government thereof, or the public profits and commodities of the said borough, and inhabitants thereof, by the major part of them, to be done and handled for the better order and government of men, inhabiting therein, and of the business of the said borough. And the said charter directs, that the said mayor and burgesses shall, from thenceforth, in future, annually acquit the said queen, her heirs and successors, from ten pounds, to be paid yearly to the master of the free-school, within the borough aforesaid, for his stipend and salary. And in the said charter is the following recital:
- "And whereas, a school, or grammar-school, founded and built by our predecessors, is in the borough, for educating the boys of the inhabitants of the same borough, and others, in literature, and for the better training up, order, and benefit of the school aforesaid, to be practised, we will, &c. &c.' Here, the mayor and capital burgesses, are impowered to nominate, elect, and appoint, and to remove him, &c.
- "Fourteenth of Charles the first, 1638. This is the governing charter of the borough; and it is incorporated by the title of the mayor, aldermen, and burgesses; and says, that there shall be within the borough aforesaid, of the free burgesses of that borough, one, who shall be called mayor; thirteen, who shall be called aldermen, whereof we will the mayor to be one, and twelve, who shall be called assistants. And the said king thereby gave full power to any person or persons, to give, grant, bequeath, assign, or alien, manors, messuages, lands, tenements, and hereditaments, to the said mayor, aldermen, and burgesses, and confirms all former charters; and, among other things, free-schools, power of naming and removing a master or masters of those schools.
- "Second of Charles the second. This charter confirms the one of Charles the first, verbatim, and gives some direction concerning the steward and town clerk.
- "Tenth of Charles the second, confirms the letters-patent aforesaid, and every thing therein contained; and also all, and all manner of liberties, &c. free-schools, power of nominating and removing the master or masters.
- "You are particularly requested to peruse sir Thomas White's statutes, and advise whether or not the right of election is in the mayor solely; in the mayor and aldermen; or in the corporation at large? and Reading school

being in a very flourishing way, and chiefly consisting of boarders, \* gentlemen's CHAP. sons in the country, and but a few boys of the town, you are desired to advise, whether or not the corporation can, consistent with their trust, elect a scholar out of the school at large, which some are desirous of doing, thinking it for the benefit of the town and school so to do? the town, on the other hand, insisting that it cannot be done where there is a town's boy in the school, qualified, though in a lower class. As the corporation wish to do what is strictly just, your opinion is desired fully."

To this case, the counsel gave the following opinion:

"The questions in this case, are two; who are entitled to be elected into Opinion. these fellowships? and who are entitled to elect?

" I think both the questions are doubtful, especially the last. But my opinion is, as to the first, that (upon supposition some facts are true, which I shall bye and bye state, and there is no time to inquire into,) the free-scholars, if they be fit to go to the university, are entitled to be elected, to the exclusion of the boarders, though such free scholars be not so high on the arrangement of classes by the master, as the boarders.

" As to the second, I think the mayor and aldermen are the electors, in exclusion of the burgesses.

" I think it very probable, from the haste with which this case seems to have been drawn up, that there has not been time to collect, and state accurately, all the information upon the subject, and therefore, I must be understood to write upon the case and papers, as laid before me, explained by two letters, which I have since received from Mr. Andrews, and which I have returned with the case.

" As to the first question, I take it for granted, that the boarders are charged for their schooling, and that the free-scholars, or rather, those that are entitled to be free scholars, are not so charged, but make a present to the master, which is merely discretionary, and that by custom, the sons only, of those who are inhabitants of the town, are considered to be entitled as free scholars.

" I mention this, because, in the very foundation of merchant taylor's school, the scholars, who go off to St. John's, pay, as I am informed, nothing,

\* The custom of receiving boarders into the school, is certainly of a modern date, not, perhaps exceeding a century back, and consequently must be an innovation on the original foundation, when no such practice was in use, and, however beneficial it may be to a few tradesmen, requires a reform on the part of the corporation. As a charitable foundation, it was at first established, and as such, sir Thomas White endowed it with two scholarships, not certainly for gentlemen's sons, who may be brought from any part of the world, with which the donor had no connection, but of the inhabitanta of the town, to whom he conceived himself most beloviden.

CHAP. or only a small customary stipend to the master, and yet board with him; and, further, the objects of this free-school are not accurately pointed out.

"There is no deed of foundation, and the charter of Elizabeth recites the school to be for the educating of the boys of the inhabitants of the borough, and others; but in fact, the town's boys only have been considered as entitled to be free scholars: this usage will supply the want of a deed of foundation, and restrain the general words in the recital of Elizabeth's charter. These premises being taken for granted, I think the word schola, ought to be applied to the state of the school in sir Thomas Whyte's time, when there appears to have been no scholars, but free scholars, and it should be taken, that he meant these to be the objects of his bounty, who were the objects of the bounty of the foundation of the school, that is, the free scholars, and that no others should be chosen, if there be a free scholar fit.

"This construction, I think, is strengthened by the reason that the founder gives, for his giving a scholarship to Tunbridge school, viz: his regard for the founder of it, which should seem to be no reason for extending his bounty to any, who are not the objects of that founder's bounty, that is, his free scholars. As to the remedy that such scholars have, if rejected, it is a matter of more consideration, than the very short time I have had this case, will allow me to advise upon. He must be careful to take all steps to declare himself to be a candidate; and I think it can do no harm to him, to tender himself for admission to St. John's college, with a proper memorial and certificate.

" As to the second question, I presume, that by the corporation at large, is meant the mayor, aldermen, and assistant burgesses only, and not the whole body of freemen, who, I think, cannot claim any right to join in the election. The words of sir Thomas White's statutes are very doubtful; it seems to me, that the mayor alone might at first have had some claim to the nomination, notwithstanding the words are in the plural number, as sir Thomas White is speaking of three, if not four corporations; and I think, that on the question between the aldermen and burgesses, the construction is rather on the aldermen's side, but the uncertainty upon the words is such, that I think the usage must prevail, which, in my opinion, is in favor of the aldermen, notwithstanding the four instances which are the other way.

"The case of doctor Merrick's son, in 1734, was not submitted to, but bishop Hoadley, either thinking he had no authority, or not wishing to decide the matter, seems to have effected a sort of compromise. The seal does not seem to be necessary to the appointment, so that all arguments drawn from thence fail.

" If the burgesses choose to follow up their claim, they should take care,

that the person they vote for, should declare himself a candidate, and send such candidate, with an appointment, signed by them, and the aldermen who voted with them, (if they will do it) to St. John's college. But, as I said before, I have no time to consider what subsequent steps they ought to take.

CHAP.

W. DAMPIER."

In consequence of this opinion, though nothing decisive seems determined by it, the burgesses were not permitted to vote; however, the election of a native, in opposition to a boarder, from another part of the country, was carried by a majority of eight to four: more, perhaps, in consequence of the vigorous opposition of the inhabitants, than from any other motive, as the majority of the aldermen appeared, at first, favorable to the wishes of the master.

However difficult the decision of these two questions might appear in the eyes of a lawyer, nothing seemed clearer to men of plain understandings, than that sir Thomas White intended these scholarships for the benefit of the natives alone, and he gives, as a reason for so doing, because "he considered that nothing is more divine, than to be bountiful to those to whom we conceive ourselves most beholden."

Now, this obligation, which sir Thomas appears so sensible of, could only arise from the affection he bore to this, (as is supposed by some) his native town; or, from his connection with the woollen manufacturers of this place, who there can be no doubt furnished him with the greater part of the cloth, his extensive dealings required, and who were, therefore, virtually the means of his accumulating his immense fortune. Under this view of the subject, I have no hesitation in saying, that it would be contrary to the intent and meaning of the statute, and an annihilation of that sense of gratitude which the donor has so pointedly expressed, as having prompted him to give the preference to this town before many others; to elect a boy from a different part of the kingdom, where the donor was bound by no such obligation, as well as a perversion of a noble institution for the encouragement of indigent merit, to bestow it upon gentlemen's sons of opulent fortunes, such as are generally educated at this seminary.

Those who contend for the eligibility of the boarders to these scholarships, found their opinion on the words in queen Elizabeth's charter, specifying the school to have been "for the education of the sons of the inhabitants, and others." (hominum et inhabitantium ejusdem burgi et alios) But, supposing the school to have been established for others, as well as for boys resident in the town, it does not, therefore, follow, that scholars, who are not sons of the inhabitants, are eligible to the scholarships given by sir Thomas White, to the school, at a time, when no other boys were educated in it, but such as be-



CHAP. longed to the town, and when the system of boarding the scholars from different parts of the kiugdom, and much less from the colonies, could not have entered into the contemplation of any one. As to the word others, so much relied on, it ought, certainly, to be taken in a more limited sense, meaning nothing more than such others, as might come from the neighboring villages or hamlets, to receive their daily education here, where, probably, from the low state of literature, at the time sir Thomas made his donation, it was only to be had.

But that the word others, in queen Elizabeth's charter, may appear to possess a greater degree of consequence, than it is entitled to, it is added, " as the school was founded for educating the sons of the inhabitants, and others, in literature, it follows, that the sons of the inhabitants, and others, are eligible, both by the letter and spirit of the endowment." Now, as the school was founded in 1445, in the reign of Henry VII, and the charter of Elizabeth was not granted 'till more than a century afterwards, this charter could make no part of the original foundation, and therefore, the word others, mentioned in the charter, is no proof that the school was founded for the educating of the sons of the inhabitants, and others.

After all, perhaps, it would be better not to rely too much on a single word, which, in all probability, was not quite correct at the time of wording the charter. Charters were generally drawn up by the officers of the crown, who, not being residents of the places, for which the charters were intended, it is not unlikely, that many things of a local nature might be inserted in them, which were not strictly true; as, in the very doubtful passage in question, wherein it is asserted, "that the school was founded and built by her progenitors, (kings of England)\* when in fact, it was neither founded nor built by any one of them. Henry VII, it is true, was the primary cause of its being founded, by ordering the abbot to settle the house and lands of a suppressed monastery, on some charitable establishment, but he did not even point out what that establishment should be, nor did he advance one farthing towards it: afterwards, when Henry VIII. had seized the temporalities of the abbey into his own hands, he agreed to pay out of them, ten pounds per annum, to the master of the school, and it was for the purpose of exonerating the crown from this charge, that the clause respecting the school, was introduced into the charter, without any intent, as it should seem, of interfering with the original foundation of the school, no one clause having been inserted in it for its future regulation and government.

Letter to the reverend the vice chancellor, &c. pag. 14.

<sup>\* &</sup>quot; Cum quædam schola sive ludus literarius fundat. et erect. existit in burgo prædicto per progenitores nostros ad educand, pueros hominum et inhabitantium ejusdem burgi et alios in literatur,"-Charter of Elizabeth.

In addition to the above arguments in favor of the eligibility of strangers, Chap. the supporters of this opinion quote the case of Mr. Pope, who, in 1769, "though a stranger, was elected in preference to a native of the town, who claimed the scholarship." This case appears, at first sight, to carry with it much weight, in favor of the argument, but when properly considered, will be found rather to militate against it, than for it.

The case, as I am informed, by good authority, was this: At the vacancy in 1769, Mr. Davenport, jun. a native of the town, was a candidate for the scholarship, being qualified in every requisite particular. It had happened, that on a former vacancy, his brother, Mr. David Davenport, had been elected to the scholarship, and was at this time at St. John's college. Whether it arose from some of the members of the corporation thinking it not right, that one family should engross both the scholarships; and had, therefore, opposed the election of the younger brother, or from some other cause, is uncertain; but some disagreements existing between them and Mr. D. Davenport, the latter, under the prevailing idea that his brother alone was eligible, prevailed with him not to attend at the hall on the day of election, it being, in his opinion, sufficient, that he had declared himself a candidate. These suggestions of his elder brother, the young man complied with, and on his not attending at the time, when the corporate body was assembled, for the purpose of the election, the town sergeant was sent to make proclamation on the top of the hall stairs, for the candidates to appear, and none other answering to the proclamation, Mr. Pope was elected, as a matter of necessity, not of choice. The Davenports, afterwards, made some endeavors to set the election aside, but without effect. Mr. Pope, however, was, we are assured, always considered by the collegians from Reading school, as an intruder.

What steps these gentlemen took to set aside the election, we have not heard; it is probable, however, that they applied to the visitors for redress, but these gentlemen are only judges of the fitness for the scholarships, of the boys presented to them, by the corporation, and not of the legality of the choice; to determine this point, they ought to have applied to the legal tribunals of the country, which alone are competent to decide the question. However, as this case has been cited as a precedent for the election of strangers, it becomes the corporate body to be cautious, never, in future, to elect any to these scholarships, that are not inhabitants of the borough. We have thus endeavored to place this questionable opinion in its true light, without the smallest wish to give offence to any one: the love of truth, and the duty we owe to the inhabitants of the town of Reading, whose cause we have adopted, would not permit us to say less, to have said more might appear invidious.

As to the other question, whether the burgesses had a right to vote, it may be observed, that though it had been negatived by the aldermen at this election, they were only a part of the corporation, and had no right to decide, in a case, wherein themselves were interested, especially as that decision was contrary, both to the statute itself, and to former custom.

The only difficulty that had arisen on this question, was on the true construction of the word seniores, used in the statute, which can only be discovered by a retrospect to the time when it was written.

Of the four places mentioned to partake of these scholarships, (for Tunbridge is out of the question) three are cities, governed by mayors and aldermen; therefore, sir Thomas could not, without making a separate clause for Reading, have better expressed the governing part of each, than by the words, prætores et seniores, though Reading had no aldermen, 'till many years afterwards. At the time this statute was made, this corporation consisted only of the mayor and burgesses; if, therefore, the burgesses had a right to vote at the election of a scholar, on its first institution, they being then the seniores of the borough, their subsequent division into primary and secondary burgesses, and after that, into aldermen and assistant burgesses, could not deprive the latter of the right of voting, which they before possessed, so that notwithstanding such great stress is laid on the word seniores, it is evident the founder meant by that general term, to include all the members of the corporation, of whom the burgesses are an essential part, as without their consent, no act of the corporation can be valid.\*

That the aldermen were not justified in their decision by custom, many cases might be adduced from the Diaries; but I shall content myself with the two following, as coming most, perhaps, to the point at issue:

"Letters from St. John's college beinge reade, Jany. 11, 1631, for the electinge a schollar from the free schoole: this was the manner of proceedinge in the election, viz: Mr. doctor Bird beinge schoolmaster, was called in, and acquainted with the letters from the college, and required to name three of the most fit schollars, whereof one of them may be chosen, and sent with a certificate to the college; and he named three, and affirmed that everie one of them was fitte. There were present, at this meeting, nine capital, and sixteen secondary burgesses; and the mayor and burgesses elected Mr. Creed, the son of John Creed, aged sixteen years."

<sup>\*</sup> According to the charter of Charles I. the duties of an assistant burgess is to be counselling and helping the mayor and aldermen, in all causes, things, and business, touching, or any way concerning the said borough.

At this election, there were twenty votes for Mr. Creed, and five for the other candidates; now, as the corporation consisted only of the same number of persons, it is evident all the burgesses must have voted on this occasion.

Снар.

"On May 3, 1700, Mr. Mayor communicated to the aldermen and burgesses, a letter, which he had received from the president and fellows of St. John the Baptist's college, signifying that the two fellowships, belonging to this borough, will be both void at Midsummer, at which time they desire them to send two young men, chosen by themselves, into those places, qualified both for learning and manners."

There were present at this election, eleven aldermen, and five burgesses, and the number of votes was thirty-two, proving that all the burgesses present, did vote, as well as the aldermen, and so I believe they will always be found to have done, prior to this period; and though in some later instances, this does not appear to have been the case, these ought to be considered rather as violations of their original right of voting, than a confirmation of the late decision of the aldermen in their own favor.\*

The intentions of the founders of charitable institutions, are seldom scrupulously fulfilled by those, to whose trust they are committed. Self interest, prejudice, favor, affection, and many other inducements frequently interfere, to to pervert the true meaning of words, or to obviate the force of expressions that counteract our wishes. We have seen above, how readily the literal sense of the statute was controverted, for the purpose of placing the election in the hands of a few, and those a part only of the corporation. In like manner, the heads of St. John's college took upon themselves to determine, what were the qualifications required in a scholar, besides the one mentioned in the foundation statute of sir Thomas Whyte, and to send back such as they were pleased to say were not fit. Now the necessary qualification, according to the statute, is such, as might be supposed not easily to be mistaken, viz: if, in the judgment of the electors, he be thought fit to learn logic; yet notwithstanding this plain exposition of the donor's meaning, respecting the qualification, the president

<sup>\*</sup> That archbishop Laud considered the burgesses as something more than a mere nominal part of the corporation, appears from his appointing, in his decree respecting Mr. Kenrick's charity, the apprentice fees to be paid, at the choice of the mayor and burgesses, without mentioning the aldermen, though they then held a principal rank in the corporation; as well, therefore, might the burgesses object to the aldermen voting, in this instance, because their name is omitted, as the aldermen can with justice object to the burgesses voting at the election of scholars, because only mayors and enalderm are mentioned in sir Thomas Whyte's statute. The truth, no doubt is, that in both instances, the whole of the corporation was intended, because none of its members are expressly excluded.

<sup>1</sup> Corporation Diary.

CHAP, X.

and fellows, in 1677, returned one of the two scholars that had bee just elected, as unqualified; not because he was unfit to learn logic, as might have been supposed, but because he had been for some time employed in trade,\* and "therefore they desired another might be sent." This is the only instance I have met with, of such a charge being alleged as a disqualification, and it is much to be regretted, that the then existing corporation submitted to it, not merely as being contrary to the intent of the donor, but because such sentiments tend to diminish the merit of industry, without which civilized society could not subsist, nor the clergy themselves be maintained; for however useful and necessary their labors may be, in checking the licentiousness of the people, they themselves add nothing to the general stock of industry.

# MASTERS OF THE SCHOOL.

John Long, was elected in 1503, and was succeeded in 1530, by
Leonard Cox, A. M. This gentleman wrote a treatise on Rhetoric, dedicated to the last abbot of Reading. He was esteemed an eloquent writer, in the times in which he lived. Among Leland's Encomia Illustrium Virorum, is the following to Leonard Cox:

Inclyta Sarmaticæ Cracovia gloria gentis,
Virtutes novit, Coxe diserte, tuas.
Novit et eloquii phænix utriusque Melancthon,
Quam te Phæbus amet, Pieriusque chorus.
Praga tuas cecinit, cecinitque Lutitia laudes,
Urbs erga doctos officiosa viros.
Talia quum constent, genetrix tua propria debet
Anglia te simili concelebrare modo.
Et faciet, nam me cantantem nuper adorta,
Hoc ipsum jussit significare tibi.

In 1541, Henry VIII. granted him his office, by patent, with a salary of ten pounds per annum, charged on the rectory of Cholsey, which had been an appendage to the abbey. He was succeeded by

Leonard Bilson, in 1546, styled, by Wood, in his Fasti, the learned

<sup>\*</sup> The boy, who was sent by the electors to St. John's, at this time, was a native of the town, and the son of a tailor, and the reason given, by the heads of the college, for his rejection, was, his having been known to have occasionally assisted his father on the shop-board. Thus, from the narrow prejudices of the times, this poor boy was punished for doing that, for which he deserved to have been rewarded.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup> Corporation Diary,

schoolmaster of Reading. He was uncle to doctor Thomas Bilson, bishop of CHAP. Winchester. He possessed several dignitaries in the church, one of which was X. a prebendship of Winchester. To him succeeded

Julius Palmer, in 1554. This gentleman was the son of a respectable tradesman at Coventry, and received the first part of his education at the freeschool in that city, from whence he was sent to Oxford, and obtained a fellowship in Magdalen college. Educated in the tenets of the church of Rome, of which he was a zealous member, he refused to conform to the new doctrines, in the reign of Edward VI, and was expelled the college, and for some time kept a school in that city.

On the accession of queen Mary, he got himself reinstated in his fellowship, which he held but a short time; for having, during his expulsion, associated with many of the reformers, he began to doubt of the orthodoxy of the tenets he had hitherto maintained with so much zeal, and having witnessed with what piety and resignation many of the martyrs suffered for their faith, he became a sincere convert to the new principles, and was again expelled.

On leaving the college, his friends procured him the mastership of this grammar school, but this he was soon afterwards obliged to resign, on account of his opinions. From Reading, he went to Eversham in Worcestershire, where his mother lived, in order to obtain from her a legacy, bequeathed to him by his father, which she refusing to give him up, and upbraiding him with his change of religion, he returned privately to Oxford, depending on the confidence of a few friends, where, through the interest of one Allen Cope, a fellow of the college, he obtained a recommendation to a school in Gloucestershire, but he had not proceeded far on his journey, before he altered his resolution, and determined to go to Reading, to try if he could obtain his salary that was due, and at the same time dispose of the goods he had left there.

Immediately on Mr. Palmer's arrival at Reading, he was taken into custody, and carried to prison, where he remained ten days in the custody of an unmerciful keeper; at the expiration of which time, he was brought before the mayor of Reading, and charged with the following crimes:

1st. That he said the queen's sword was not put into her hand to execute tyranny, and to kill and murder the true servants of God.

2nd. That the sword was too blunt towards the papists, but too sharp towards the true christians.

3rd. That certain servants of sir Francis Knowles, and others, resorting to his lectures, fell out among them, and had almost committed murder, therefore he was a sower of sedition, and a procurer of unlawful assemblies.

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4th. That his landlady\* had written a letter to him, which they had intercepted, wherein she requested him to return to Reading, and sent her commendations by the token, that the knife lay hid under the beam, whereby they inferred, that she had conspired with him against her husband.

5th. That they once found him alone with his said landlady, by the fire side, the door being shut, thereby suspecting him of incontinency with her.

Three men who were suborned for the purpose, swore these things against him before the mayor, who thereupon sent him to the cage,† to be an open spectacle of contempt to the people; and a report was spread, that he was thus punished for the most enormous crimes and misdemeanors, which had been fully proved against him.

After he had been thus unjustly exposed to public shame, the mayor sent for him to answer for himself, concerning what was laid to his charge. He fully overthrew all the evidence, by proving the letter, said to have been written to him by his landlady, to be of their own forging, and in the most incontestible manner acquitted himself of all the other charges brought against him. The mayor was confounded to think he should have given such credit to his persecutors, and though he did not chuse to discharge him immediately, yet he thought of doing it as soon as a convenient opportunity should offer.

When Mr. Palmer was in prison, he was visited by one John Galant, who said to him, "Oh Palmer! thou hast deceived many men's expectations,

<sup>\*</sup> From the mention here made of his landlady, it is evident Mr. Palmer, instead of possessing a house for the reception of boarders, was himself only a lodger; and as no notice is taken of any sums being due to him, from his scholars, which must have been the case, if any thing had at that time been payable for their education, (the only motive given for his return, being to recover his salary, and dispose of his goods,) it may reasonably be inferred, that the education afforded by the school, was entirely free, as its name imports, and however small the salary (10% per annum) may now appear, yet, considering the very low price of every article of necessity, at this period, we may not unreasonably suppose it to have been equal to 50%, or 60% of our present money, which, though not a very plentiful income, might, even now, be acceptable to many a poor curate. The truth is, the nature of this foundation, has, for a long period, been misunderstood. The original intention was certainly charity; as a charitable institution, it was founded by the abbot, at the request of Henry VII. the funds for its support were paid from lands belonging to a charity, and as such it seems to have been considered for more than a century, 'till the introduction of the system of boarding boys in the master's house; since which, the original institution has been gradually obscured, by the splendor of large establishments; it has no longer been considered as it really is, a charity school for the benefit of the town, but as a seminary for the education of gentlemen's sons, whose parents being better able to reward the literary abilities of the masters, their reception has been encouraged, to the almost total exclusion of those, for whom it was designed.

<sup>+</sup> The cage then stood over the entrance into the church yard, belonging to St. Lawrence's parish, and now forms part of Mr. John Blandy's house: it was rented of the parish, by the corporation, at the yearly rent of twelve-pence.

for we hear that you suffer not for righteousness' sake, but for thy own de- CHAP. merits."

Palmer replied: "Oh brother Galant! these be the old practices of that fanatical brood; but be well assured, and God be praised for it, I have so purged myself, and detected their falsehood, that from henceforth I shall be no more molested therewith."

When his enemies found they had miscarried in their plot against him, they determined to accuse him of heresy. This was accordingly done; in consequence of which, he was taken before the mayor, and Mr. Bird, the bishop of Salisbury's official, in order to give an account of his faith, and to answer such information as might be laid against him.

In the course of his examination, they gathered from him sufficient grounds to proceed against him. Articles were accordingly drawn up, and sent to doctor Jeffrey, at Newbury, who was to hold his visitation there on the Thursday following.

The next day, Mr. Palmer was conducted to Newbury, and immediately on his arrival, was committed to the blind-house prison.

On Thursday, July 10. 1556, a place being prepared in the parish church of Newbury, to hold the consistory court: doctor Jeffrey, representative of the bishop of Sarum, sir Richard Abridge, John Winchcomb, esq. and the minister of Englefield, repaired thither, as commissioners appointed for that purpose.

After the prisoner was produced, the commission read, and other things passed according to the usual form, doctor Jeffrey, in the presence of a great many spectators, called to Palmer, and asked if he was the writer of a twopenny pamphlet, that had been lately published?

Having some altercation about this affair, in which Palmer answered in his own behalf, with great force, the doctor, rising from his seat, said to him: " Mr. Palmer, we have received certain writings and articles against you, from the right worshipful the mayor of Reading, and other justices, whereby we understand, that being brought before them, you were convicted of certain heresies:

- " 1st, That you deny the supremacy of the pope's holiness.
- 2nd, That you affirm there are but two sacraments.
- "3d, You say that the priest sheweth up an idol at mass, and therefore you went to no mass since your first coming to Reading.
  - " 4th, You hold there is no purgatory.
- " 5th, You are charged with sowing sedition, and seeking to divide the unity of the queen's subjects."

Several books and pamphlets were then produced, and Mr. Palmer being

CHAP, asked if he was the author of them, replied in the affirmative, declaring, at the same time, that they contained nothing but what was founded on the word of God.

Jeffrey then reviled him, declaring that such opinions were dictated by no good spirit, and that he was very wicked in slandering the dead; and railing at a catholic and learned man living.

Mr. Palmer replied, "if it be a slander, he slandered himself, for I do but report his own writings, and expose absurdities therein contained; and I esteem it not railing, to inveigh against Annas and Caiaphas, being dead.

The doctor, incensed at this reply, assured him that he would take such measures, as should compel him to recant his damnable errors and heresies; but Palmer told him, that although of himself he could do nothing, yet, if he and all his enemies, both bodily and ghostly, should exert their efforts, they would not be able to effect what they desired, neither could they prevail against the mighty powers of divine grace, by which he understood the truth, and was determined to speak it boldly.

After some further discourse, the minister of Englefield pointed to the pix, over the altar, saying to Palmer, " What seest thou there?" to which he replied, "A canopy of silk, embroidered with gold." "But what is within?" demanded the priest, "A piece of bread in a cloth," replied he.

The priest then upbraided him as a vile heretic, and asked him if he did not believe that those who receive the sacrament of the altar, do truly eat Christ's natural body? He answered, "If the sacrament of the Lord's supper be administered as Christ did ordain it, the faithful receivers do, indeed, spiritually and truly eat and drink in it Christ's body and blood "

On being asked if he meant, with the holy mother church, really, carnally, and substantially? He declared, "He could not believe so absurd and monstrous a doctrine."

After this, the court adjourned, when one of the justices took Palmer aside, and in the presence of several persons, exhorted him to revoke his opinions, and thereby preserve his life, promising at the same time, if he would conform to the church, to take him into his family, as his chaplain, and give him a handsome salary; or, if he chose not to resume the clerical function, to get him an advantageous farm.

Mr. Palmer thanked him for his kind offer, but assured him that he had already renounced his living, in two places, for the sake of Christ, and his gospel, and was ready to yield up his life in defence of the same, if God, in his providence, should think fit to call him to it.

When the justice found he could by no means make him recant, he said,

"Well, Palmer, I perceive that one of us two must be damned, for we are of two faiths, and there is but one faith that leads to life and salvation."

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Palmer observed on the occasion, that it was possible they might both be saved, for that as it had pleased a merciful God, to call him at the third hour of the day, that is, in the prime of life, at the age of twenty-four, so he trusted, that in his infinite goodness, he would graciously call him at the eleventh hour of his old age, and give him an eternal inheritance among the saints in light.

After much conversation had passed, and many efforts tried in vain, Palmer was remanded back to prison.

The next morning, the commissioners required him to subscribe to certain articles, which they had gathered from his answers, with the addition of those odious epithets and terms, horrid, heretical, damnable, and execrable doctrines; which, when he had read, he refused to subscribe, affirming, that the doctrines which he held and professed, were not such, but agreeable to, and founded on, the word of God.

Jeffrey being now greatly incensed, Palmer consented to subscribe, provided they would strike out those epithets; upon which, they gave him a pen, and bade him do as he pleased; when he had made such alterations as he thought proper, he then subscribed.

Having thus set his hand to the articles, which they had drawn up, they asked him if he would recant, but he peremptorily refusing, they pronounced sentence against him, and he was delivered over to the secular power, and afterwards burnt in the sand-pits at Newbury.

He was succeeded by Thomas Thackham, in 1556, by means not very honorable to his character, and having held the mastership several years, he was succeeded by

John Smyth, 1569, who, according to Wood, was also vicar of St. Lawrence's, in this town, and died in 1596, but had resigned the mastership in his life time, and was succeeded by

— Hampton, 1583.\* who held the school five years, and was followed by the

Rev. Thomas Braddock, B. A. in 1588. Rev. Thomas Charleton, A. M. † 1596. Andrew Bird, D. D. 1610.

### \* See Rowe Mores Collections.

<sup>+</sup> As no regular register has been kept of the masters of the school, it is difficult to assign the exact time of their admission. Mr. Coates says, Carleton succeeded Braddock in 1589, but I find Braddock was the master in 1594.

<sup>\*</sup> Fox's Book of Martyrs.

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William Page, A. M. 1629. He was elected at the particular request of Charles I. in consequence of a letter, written in the life time of doctor Bird, by Mr. secretary Windebank, to whom the corporation voted a "present of two good sugar loaves, of thirty or forty shillings value;" but whether for this, or other services, does not appear. In 1642, Mr. Page was sequestered, by the commissioners for Berkshire, and the school-room converted, by their order, into a magazine for the soldiers, then in garrison here. After this,

Mr. S. Pocock got possession of the school, but does not appear to have been considered by the corporation, who alone had the nomination of the mastership, in any other light, than as an intruder. Accordingly, many attempts were made to remove him, and among others, it was alleged against him, that he was incapable of instructing the scholars; and the three vicars were desired to meet in the council chamber, to examine him in this particular, but the gentlemen not attending at the appointed time, nothing was done, and he held the mastership 'till 1649, but was not allowed to receive the twenty pounds per annum, given by archbishop Laud, as appears from the following entry in the diary:

"Upon enquiry made concerninge the abillitie and diligence of the schoole-master, in the free-schoole in Reading, it was resolved as followeth: Upon several complaints against Mr. Pocock, the schoole-master of Reading, and examination of the proficiencies of his schollers, in his presence, (he himself refusing to be examined, and declining all other ingenious waies of tryall, by the visitors,) we do conceive the said Mr. Pocock to be altogether unable to govern the school aforesaid; and, therefore, we do not approve of the said Mr. Pocock, as having any right, for the time to come, to receive the twenty pounds per annum, payable to the schoole-master of Readinge, by the will and graunte of the late archbishop of Canterbury."

" It was likewise thought fitt, that, for the time to come, the masters of the free-schoole, in Readinge, be examined as followeth:

" Articles of enquirie, for the visitation of the schoole of Readinge:

" 1st. What authors are your schollers able to give an account of in their several forms?

" 2nd. How many schollers have you in the schoole ripe for the university?

" 3rd. What method doe you use in teaching?

" 4th. What exercises doe your schollers dailie or weeklie perform?

"5th. Doe you train up your schollers in the knowledge of religion: and what course doe you take for that purpose?

\* Presents of this kind were, at this period, commonly made by the corporation, to the members of parliament for the borough, and to the judges, at the assizes.

\*6 6th. Doe you pray with your schollers morning and evening?

"7th. By what testimonie doth it appeare that you have been approved to be able, and that you are diligent in discharge of your duty?

"8th. What times of remission are usually graunted your schollers, by way of recreation?

"9th. Doe you diligentlie attend upon the publick ordinances of God? doe you cause your schollers to frequent the place of worship, and see that they behave themselves reverently there, duringe the time of all exercises of religion?"

He was succeeded by William Waddon, in 1649, who was followed by Gabriel Reeve, 1652. To him succeeded

Robert Jennings, 1654, who was expelled by the commissioners appointed to remove all such as were accounted scandalous, ignorant, and insufficient ministers. After this

Thomas Gerrard, A. M. was elected, in 1655, in consequence of an order from Oliver Cromwell; and Mr. Jennings, at that time master, was removed, to make way for his immediate successor. On the death of the protector, the corporation ordered Mr. Jennings to be restored, but Gerrard refusing to resign, or acknowledge their right, an action was brought against him, at the next Abingdon assizes, and the cause being heard, a verdict was given in favor of the corporation, whereupon they again nominated Mr. Jennings, but he refusing the mastership, they elected

—— Edwards, 1659, who afterwards resigned, and was succeeded by Thomas Ireland, 1668, who was dicharged for lunacy, in 1672, when the corporation elected

William Gostwick, 1672. Thomas May, 1687. Haviland John Hiley, 1716. John Spicer, 1749.

William Wise, 1771. On this gentleman's resignation, in 1781, the reverend Richard Valpy, the present master, was elected.

### THE BLUE - COAT SCHOOL.

This school takes its name from the dress worn by the children, which consists of a blue vest, girt round the loins by a leather strap, a waistcoat, leather breeches, and yellow stockings, probably the common dress of the period of its original institution.

The school was founded by Mr. Richard Aldworth,\* in 1656, who, by his will, dated in 1646, bequeathed the sum of four thousand pounds to the corporation, in trust, for the purpose of maintaining a schoolmaster, lecturer, and twenty boys. With a part of this sum, they immediately purchased the lease of a house, called the Talbot, where the school was first established, but the house being out of repair, they soon afterwards obtained a new lease of Mr. Blagrave, for the term of five hundred years, at the yearly rent of eight pounds, and a fine of eight pounds, at the end of every ten years. In consequence of this extension of the lease, the corporation took down the original building, and erected the present school-house, on the same site, for the sum of three hundred pounds, exclusive of the old materials.

The house consists of a centre, and two wings extending to the street, and enclosed in front with a brick wall, forming in the centre a square plot for a play ground. At each extremity of the wings, is a carved figure of a boy, with a bible in his right hand, and pointing upwards with the fore finger of his left, in appropriate habiliments, one being dressed in blue, the other in green, with the following inscriptions on two tablets, placed against the wall, on each side the figures:

The blue-coat boy.

Clad in this hieroglyphic veil, Two mystick emblems I reveal; The sacred volume in my hand, Directs you to the promised land,

My azure mantle of the sky,
To heav'n above directs your eye;
While to it's seat I guide your look,
Your guide to find it is this book.

The green-coat boy.

The Great Creator at it's birth, Did in my garment cloath the earth, Whose emblem sets before your eyes, The scene of the first paradise.

An ancestor of the present right honorable lord Braybrook. There is a full-length picture of him in the council chamber, holding a book in his right hand; on one side, is represented a globe, with a female figure standing on it; over her head, on a scroll, veritus omnia valet. On the other side, is a death's head, and under it, more mahi salus.



His Monument in Sonning Church Berks.



The sacred oracles that tell How from it our first parents fell, Here teach us how by grace to win The paradise they lost by sin.



It is difficult to discover what motives could induce the corporation to erect this building on so confined a spot, at a time when they were possessed of land in the neighborhood, so much better adapted to the purpose; even the piece of ground allotted to the house for a garden, would have been much more eligible than the present situation, where the children have only a paved court, about forty feet square, to play in, walled in on every side, where the rays of the sun never penetrate, and where the atmosphere must be particularly noxious, from the want of a free circulation.

In the year 1657, they purchased, with this legacy, a farm at Sherfield, for the sum of two thousand pounds, and in 1659, with the further sum of one thousand nine hundred and ninety pounds, they purchased another farm, adjoining, making together, three hundred and sixty acres and a half, of arable, meadow, and wood land.

In 1666, sir Thomas Rich, bart. of Sonning, gave, by will, to the corporation in trust, the sum of one thousand pounds, producing fifty-four pounds per annum, for the purpose of maintaining and educating six boys in this school; one to be chosen out of each of the three parishes, and the three others from the parish of Sonning.\* In which church is an elegant table monument, to the memory of sir Thomas Rich, and his eldest son, on which are placed two handsome marble urns, with the following inscriptions:

On the left-hand urn:

P. M. S.

In Crypta sub hac marmorum strue,
Reposta sunt Exuviæ
D. Thomæ Rich, Baronetti.

Qui

Gloucestriâ natus Educatus Londini, Commerciis toto orbe locupletatus Sunningæ hîc obijt,

Dives opum et operum bonorum.

Obt. Octob. xv.0

Anno Dm. MDCLXVII°. Ætatis suæ LXVI°.

<sup>·</sup> A copy of sir Thomas's will, is entered in the church-wardens book, for the parish of Sonning.

On the reverse:

Quantum, Vir optimus, vivus, vidensque Quis dixerit.

(Vel sinistra ejus nesciente quid dextra fecerat)
Moriens certe plus decem librarum millibus,
In Dei cultum, et pauperum levamen,
Sparsit, dicam, an prodegit.
Quæ si tacuerint homines,
Vel hi lapides loquentur,
Deus certo certius.

Quem de substantia sua, tam impense honoravit Suum, in die decretorio non negabit, Eugè serve bone et fidelis. Abi, Lector et fac similiter.

On the right-hand urn:

Quin iterum cedo oculum, Lector:
Ut et legas denuo, et lachrymeris,
Nam duplici urnæ, haud sufficit simplex dolor.
Thomas Rich Armiger, Thomæ Baronetti filius
Primogenitus et unice dilectus
Suavissimus et magna spei juvenis.
Amor et deliciæ parentum,
In eadem hac Crypta sepultus est.
Cui ipse pater ultra quadrienium
Et dolori et desiderio ejus superstes non fuit
Huic enim immortuus est.
Obijt quindecennis Febr. xxvi.
A. D. MDCLXIII.

On the reverse:

Antiqua Elizabetha Cokaynorum familia oriunda
Mæsta, in hoc funere, mater,
Conjux, in illo, mæsta,
Hoc, amoris sui pariter,
Et doloris, monumentum,
Suis sumptibus erigi curavit;
Et tam charis cineribus, spondet, suos

Cum Deus voluerit, sociandos.
Vos interim qui legitis,
Estote etiam parati,
Quia, quà non putatis horâ.—

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In 1696, Mr. John Hall gave lands, to the value of twenty-five pounds fifteen shillings per annum, vested in the corporation, for the support of a school, to be established adjoining his alms-houses, in Chain-lane, for the maintenance and education of three poor boys; one to be chosen out of each parish, but the fund having, of late years, been found insufficient for their maintenance, the school-house has been let for a dispensary, and the boys transferred to the blue-coat school.

In 1720, Mr. John West, among other charitable gifts, gave to the town the sum of one thousand pounds, producing annually, the sum of forty-nine pounds sixteen shillings, for the maintenance and education of two poor boys out of each parish, and for placing the said boys out apprentices; he also gave fee farm rents, to the annual value of six pounds five shillings and three-pence, for the same purpose, vested in the corporation.

In the same year, Mr. William Malthus, gave by will, a rent charge of ninety-one pounds per annum, for the education and maintenance of eleven boys, taken by equal proportions out of each parish.\* These were originally dressed in green, but now all the dresses are alike.

Likewise, in the same year, Mr. John Pottenger, gave fifteen pounds per annum, towards the maintenance and education of two boys, to be chosen alternately, out of each parish; payable out of an estate at Blossom's-end in the parish of Tilehurst.

And in 1786, Mr. John Leggatt, as a mark of his gratitude for the maintenance and education he had received in the school, left the sum of fifty pounds, towards its support, without entailing it with any further burthens

From the above list of benefactions to this school, it appears to be endowed with no more than the annual sum of 3841. (allowing two hundred pounds to be the annual income of the lands purchased with the four thousand pounds bequeathed by Mr. Aldworth,) for the maintenance of forty-eight boys, independent of the master's salary, rent of the house, repairs. &c. reducing the average for each boy, under eight pounds per annum. This sum being inadequate for the purpose, under the present advanced prices of all the necessary articles of life, the corporation have at times been under the necessity of reducing the number of the boys, but, in general, the school is nearly full,

<sup>\*</sup> Perhaps the number of boys is not quite correct, it being impossible to divide d von equally in three parts, without a fraction, which the subject here will not easily admit of.

owing to the economical manner in which the funds are applied, and the indefatigable exertions of one of the members of the corporation, under whose management the affairs of the school are more immediately placed. 'As a proof of the desire of the corporation to render this useful charity as beneficial to the poorer inhabitants, as was intended by the founders, they have, within these few years, expended more than three thousand pounds, besides what the funds for their maintenance have afforded, in keeping up, as near as possible, the original number of boys. But this could not be effected without intrenching on some other charities less beneficial.

# THE GREEN SCHOOL.

This school likewise takes its name from the dress of the children educated in it, who are females, daughters of decayed tradesmen, residents in the town, or orphans, who have been left unprovided for by their parents.

In the year 1779, the reverend Charles Sturges, vicar of St. Mary's, the reverend doctor Nicholls, vicar of St. Lawrence's, and the honorable and reverend W. B. Cadogan, vicar of St. Giles's, considering the advantages of a religious and moral education, to be equally, if not more necessary for the female sex, for whom no establishment had hitherto been formed in this town, than for the boys, whose education had long before been provided for, set on foot a plan for the maintenance and education of an indefinite number of girls, to be supported by voluntary contributions; the girls to be chosen equally, out of each parish, and their number to be increased, as often as the funds appropriated for the purpose would admit.

This scheme was so favorably received by the public, that they had it in their power to open the school in the same year, in a house in the Butts, for the maintenance of six children, from the first subscriptions; and these increasing annually, have since enabled the trustees to add considerably to the number of children, and to provide a very commodious house in Broad-street, for their reception.

This institution promises to be of infinite advantage to the objects of the charity, as, in addition to their receiving a judicious education, they are amply provided, while in the house, with dress, and every other necessary, and at their leaving it, they are apprenticed to some of the most respectable families in the town; that as their infant days were relieved from penury and ignorance, so their riper years may be passed in the duties more immediately necessary to render them useful members of society.

The following particulars of this institution, are extracted from a pamphlet CHAP. published by the trustees, entitled, an Account of the Reading Girls Charity School:

"While at school, they are brought up in the habits of diligence and industry, to do all kinds of plain work, chiefly at the royal asylum prices, to cut out linen, mark, and knit, to perform the business of the house, and kitchen, to wash, iron, and get up linen, and thus to qualify themselves for good and useful servants, and they are encouraged, by a reward of two-pence, to be deducted out of every shilling that is paid for needle-work, performed by them, which needle-work has been approved by their employers, and of which they have, in general, great plenty upon their hands. They are regularly trained up in the principles of the christian religion, in virtue and modesty, in honesty and truth, in decency, humility, civility, and mutual kindness, and in all due subordination. And an account of their behavior is given to the governesses, governors, or trustees, at their frequent visits, to superintend the government of the school. They rise early, prayers are read every morning in the family, after which they make the beds, and sweep the rooms. They breakfast at eight. At nine o'clock school begins, when lessons, in the old and new testaments, and in Mrs. Trimmer's abridgment of those sacred scriptures, are read. They are taught to spell from Mrs. Trimmer's charity-school spelling-book, and Entick's dictionary, and to say their prayers and hymns by heart. They are instructed in Crossman's introduction to the knowledge of the christian religion.

" After the reading and spelling, they work 'till twelve. At twelve they dine, play one hour after dinner, and then return to their work, 'till it grows dark, in the winter, when they leave off 'till six o'clock, and then return to reading and working 'till eight. In summer they continue at their work, from about half-past one 'till six, and then leave off for play or walking 'till eight. At eight they sup, and after prayers have been read to them in the evening, they go to bed about nine.\*

"They, with the mistress, or assistant, or both, attend divine worship at St. Mary's church, on certain week days, and twice on every Sunday, when they likewise bear no inconsiderable part of the psalmody of the church, from the gallery, in which they are placed during divine service.

\* With due submission to the trustees of this excellent charity, we conceive that this routine of work and play, partakes too much of the former. Early youth is the season intended by providence for the enjoyments of play, and exemption from work; but do we not endeavor to counteract this benevolent intention, when we doom the infant race, who fly to us for succour, to twelve hours hard labor, and close confinement, in the short space of one day, while we allow them only two hours for recreation? Shall we, in return for the common necessaries of life we bestow upon them, deprive them of that, which at their age can alone make life comfortable to them?

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" For the last half-year of their continuance in the school, they are taught, by a proper master, to write, and cast accounts. When they are in their fifteenth year, they are regularly examined before the committee, with respect to their proficiency, and in or at the expiration of that year, they are, with the approbation of the committee, bound apprentices to creditable and respectable house-keepers, in or out of the borough of Reading, as domestic servants, or to learn a trade, for the space of four or five years, upon condition that five pounds shall be paid, or allowed by the charity, for their being clothed, according to the following articles: one bonnet, three night-caps, three day-caps, one coloured handkerchief, one white handkerchief, two gowns, one quilted petticoat, one baize petticoat, three shifts, one pair of stays, two pair of stockings, one pair of pattens, one pair of shoes, two colored aprons, two white aprons, one pair of pockets, one pair of gloves, one cloak, buckles, and other odd articles. And upon condition that the masters and mistresses shall be bound to find them in every thing afterwards, for the term of their apprenticeship, and at the expiration of that term, to clothe them as well as they were clothed at the beginning of their apprenticeships, or to pay the sum of five pounds in trust, to the governors and trustees, to be laid out for the use of the girls.

"The girls, upon leaving the school, are furnished with a Bible, and a Common Prayer-book, the Whole Duty of Man, and Crossman's Introduction to the Knowledge of the Christian Religion. To encourage them to behave well, and do credit to the institution, after they have left it, the girls, at the expiration of half their apprenticeships, upon producing to the committee a certificate, signed by their masters or mistresses, of their good behaviour, are rewarded with half-a-guinea; and at the expiration of the whole of their apprenticeships, upon the same conditions, they receive another half-guinea. And we have the satisfaction to add, that several girls have produced the required certificates, and received the rewards at both periods.

"Every St. Thomas's day, a sermon is preached alternately, at each church, and a collection made at the church doors, for the benefit of this charity, the amount of which is carried to the original fund.

"The foundation deed, with a declaration of trust, was enrolled in his majesty's high court of chancery, on the fifth day of February 1793."

The government of this charity, is vested in a committee, composed of the mayor of the town, for the time being, and the senior alderman of the borough, and six ladies, two out of each parish, as governors and governesses, and the three vicars, who act as trustees.

One of the greatest promoters and benefactors to this charity, at its foundation, was the late Mr. alderman J. Richards, who, in addition to a donation in his life time, of five hundred pounds bank stock, left by his will, out of his

personal estate, the further sum of fifteen hundred pounds, subject to the pay- CHAP. ment of one guinea to the preacher, and five shillings to the clerk, on St. Tho- X. mas's day.

In 1780, the reverend James Smith, rector of West Bagborough, gave, by will, to this charity, the sum of ten pounds ten shillings.

In 1783, a friend unknown, gave the sum of one hundred pounds, for the promotion of this charity.

The reverend John Spicer, by his will, dated July 30, 1784, gave to this institution, two leasehold tenements, situated in Cross-street, the annual rent whereof was twelve pounds: and likewise the reversion of two hundred pounds, at the demise of one life, since deceased. The whole vested in the three vicars: but the former bequest has been since set aside, being contrary to the mortmain act.

A lady unknown, gave two benefactions, amounting together to thirty pounds ten shillings.

Mrs. Clementina Frognall, in her life time, gave to this charity the sum of fifty pounds, at its commencement, to purchase furniture for the house, and at her decease, bequeathed the further sum of one hundred pounds stock, in the four per cent bank annuities,

The honorable and right reverend doctor Shute Barrington, bishop of Salisbury, gave ten pounds towards its establishment.

In 1786, John Leggatt, esq. of Ipswich, gave to it by will, the sum of twenty pounds.

In 1788, Mrs. Coventry, at her decease, gave to the charity, the sum of ten pounds ten shillings.

In 1789, Aubery Flory, esq. gave, by will, the sum of three hundred pounds, to increase the funds of the school.

In 1790, a friend to the charity gave twenty pounds, and

Mrs. Zinzan, another benefactress, gave five guineas for the same purpose.

In 1792, the right honorable the earl of Radnor, gave thirty pounds to the charity.

The same year, Mrs. Rachel Veasey gave to it, by will, a reversion of three guineas per annum, secured in the South Sea funds.

Several other small gifts have since been added to it, and the annual subscriptions amount to about eighty pounds on an average, but these are continually varying, as deaths, or other circumstances, take place.

The following is the amount of the funded stock, belonging to this foundation, as certified under the hands of two commissioners, acting under the property tax.

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- 5001. three per cent. reduced. In the names of Henry Deane, John Richards, William Bromley Cadogan, and Charles Sturges.
- 1001. ditto. In the names of Charles Sturges, Joseph Eyre, and John Green.
- 1001. four per cent. In the names of Richard Maul, Charles Sturges, and others.
- 3001. ditto. In the names of Charles Sturges, John Green, and William Bromley Cadogan.
- 25001. New South Sea annuities. In the names of Charles Sturges, William Bromley Cadogan, John Green, and Joseph Eyre.
- 6001. Old South Sea annuities. In the names of John Nichols, William Bromley Cadogan, John Green, and Joseph Eyre.
- 5001. Old South Sea annuities. In the names of Charles Sturges, William Talbot, John Nichols, William Bromley Cadogan, Joseph Eyre, and John Green.

The present number of children educated in this school, is twenty-one.

## THE FOUNDATION SCHOOL.

This school is situated adjoining the Oracle, in Minster-street, and was founded in 1766, in consequence of the sum of three hundred and fourteen pounds five shillings and eleven-pence, South Sea stock, being purchased with a legacy, left by Mr. Joseph Neale, for that purpose. The vicar of St. Mary's, and two others, are the trustees. In this school, eight male, and eighteen female children are taught to read.

## THE SCHOOL OF INDUSTRY.

This school, for female children, was instituted under the patronage of Mrs. Cadogan, and is supported by the voluntary contribution of several ladies of the town. The number of children educated in the seminary, are thirty-four who are taught reading and plain-work, and are likewise clothed. Many ladies in the town and neighborhood employ their leisure hours in making a variety of articles in fancy-work, which are afterwards disposed of at fairs, for which purpose, a vacant shop or stall is provided, and some of the ladies attend the sale; the money arising from which is appropriated to the maintenance of the school. This is a most excellent charity, and worthy of being imitated by all who have it in their power, by a little industry, to contribute towards the future happiness of this too much neglected class of individuals, who, instead of passing their youthful days in vice and idleness, receive, under the protecting

hand of their patroness, an education sufficient for all the purposes of their sta- CHAP. tion in life, and are placed in a situation to become useful members of society.

Sunday schools are established by subscription, in each of the three parishes, as well as by the dissenters, in their respective congregations. All the children attending these schools, have been annually clothed by Mr. Edward Simeon, during his life time; and at his decease, he bequeathed the sum of 25001. in trust to the corporation, to apply the interest arising therefrom, annually, for the same purpose of providing the children with new clothes, to be given them prior to the day of electing the mayor, on which day they are all to attend divine service in St. Lawrence's church,

In addition to the above schools, most of which have been long established, we have to record the two following: the consequences of the liberal sentiments entertained by the present generation, who, in works of charity, have shewn themselves not inferior to their forefathers; in liberality of opinion much their superiors. If we recur back but a few years, we find the teachers of schools were very few in number, and those mostly confined to members of the established church, who were obliged to procure a licence from the diocesan before they were permitted to exercise their laborious calling. the avenues to knowledge are not only thrown open to all who are desirous of being instructed, but they are even invited to learn the elements of reading, writing, and arithmetic, without any expence to their parents, and that on principles so easy to be impressed on infant minds, that children taught in these schools very soon acquire a proficiency in learning sufficient for most of the purposes of common life, which is all that is intended by them. poor man will, by means of these useful institutions, be no longer confined, through a want of the necessary education, to toil all the days of his life for the advantage of others: if he is but possessed of an active spirit, and endued with common understanding, he may now aspire to a higher rank in society, and benefit by his exertions that society, who by giving him an education have enabled him to throw off those fetters, with which his forefathers had so long been bound.

The first of these, according to the period of their establishment, is the

### LANCASTRIAN SCHOOL.

This school was established in the year 1810, in consequence of the impression made on the minds of his auditors by Mr. Lancaster, on reading his lectures, the preceding year, in the Town-hall. A method so novel in its nature, and so easy in practice, could not fail to attract the notice of men of liberal minds, and accordingly several gentlemen of the town were induced

CHAP. to set on foot a subscription, for the purpose of establishing a school on his cheap and comprehensive mode of education. Their first experiment was tried on one hundred boys, who were instructed in a room hired by a committee for that purpose. This trial having succeeded beyond their expectations, and the subscriptions encreasing, they determined to enlarge the establishment, and accordingly purchased a piece of ground in Southamptonstreet, in the name of trustees nominated for the purpose, and erected on it a spacious room, sufficient to contain from three to four hundred boys, with desks, seats, &c. This building, with the purchase of the land, cost the subscribers about six hundred pounds. Having procured one of Mr. Lancaster's pupils for a teacher, the school was opened in November, when two hundred children were admitted; since which, the number has encreased to three hundred and twenty. The annual expenditure, including the master's salary, is only one hundred and ten pounds, or about six shillings yearly for each boy, and "the general improvement of the children is a source of great satisfaction to the committee and the subscribers." Two visiters are appointed out of the committee, monthly, who inspect the school, and enter their observations in a book kept for that purpose, which is laid before the committee at their meetings. The public are also invited to visit the school; and the master has shewn a laudable desire to give every information and satisfaction to enquiries. A small box is fixed in the school to receive the benefactions of visiters, which is afterwards bestowed among those whose proficiency entitles them to rewards.

> Soon after the first establishment of the school, the late E. Simeon, esq. who was ever ready to contribute towards every charitable institution that promised advantage to his native town, gave the sum of five hundred pounds three per cent. stock, which remains as a fund toward the annual expences of the year, if wanted; but, as the subscriptions have hitherto exceeded the outgoings, it is hoped the committee will soon be enabled to increase the funded property.

> To such of the boys whose good behavior and improvement have attracted the notice of the committee, a bible is given, on their leaving school.

> The committee consists of twenty-one, who are elected by the subscribers, and to whom, together with the treasurer and secretary, the management of the establishment is entrusted.

> Subscribers of one guinea annually, have the privilege of nominating two children, to be instructed in the school. Those who subscribe ten guineas at one payment have the same privilege, and are governors for life.

The following regulations have been established for the school:

"First. That a school-master be appointed.

"Second. That the committee shall, at each monthly meeting, which shall be the last Thursday in the month, appoint two inspectors or visiters for each week in the ensuing month, who shall attend at least twice in the week at the school-room, for the purpose of ascertaining the progress made by the children in their learning. These visiters, after having received the master's report, shall enter any remarks they may deem proper in a book to be kept for that purpose: these remarks are to be signed by them, and are to be laid monthly before the committee.

"Third. That no book of instruction be introduced into the school, but the holy scriptures, (without comments) extracts therefrom, Watts's hymns for children, and lessons in spelling and arithmetic.

"Fourth. That children of five years old and upwards be received, by a written recommendation from a subscriber, who shall state the name, age, and residence of the same; and, as it is desirable the small schools already in the town should be injured as little as possible, it is hoped that such children will be selected whose parents are unable to provide them education.\*

"Fifth. That the recommendations for the admission of children be sent to the secretary or treasurer.

"Sixth. That no child be admitted with any infectious disorder; and the parents are required to send them each day washed, combed, and decent in their appearance: for neglect of which (if persisted in) the child to be dismissed.

"Seventh. That if any child be dismissed for improper behavior, or other cause (after suitable admonition) the subscriber who presented him shall be immediately informed thereof, that the vacancy may be filled up.

"Eighth. That the children attend school from the first day of November to the twenty-fifth day of March, from nine to twelve o'clock in the morning, and from two till four in the afternoon; and from the twenty-fifth day of March to the first day of November, from eight to twelve in the morning, and from two to five in the afternoon. That Saturday afternoon be considered a half holiday, and that there be two vacations in the year: the two first weeks in August, and two weeks at Christmas.

"Ninth. That on the children's going from school, both morning and afternoon, the master and monitors do attend them to the corner of Crownlane, in Southampton-street, from whence they are to go quietly to their respective homes.

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<sup>\*</sup> This regulation is, we fear, not sufficiently atteeded to.

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"Tenth. That the school be open at all times during school-hours to visiters, introduced by a subscriber.

"Eleventh. That the annual subscriptions be collected by the master, who shall pay them into the hands of the treasurer, and be allowed six-pence

in the pound.

"Twelfth. That the object of this institution being solely to instruct the children in reading, writing, and arithmetic, thereby rendering them more useful members of society, without any reference whatsoever to sect or party in religious opinions, it is expected their parents and friends will see they attend some place of divine worship on the Lord's day.

"Thirteenth. That the committee, for any just cause, may remove the school-master, upon giving him two months' notice in writing. And, if the master should at any time be desirous of leaving his situation, he shall be at liberty to do so, upon giving similar notice to the committee.

"Fourteenth. That if any additional regulation should be thought necessary for the better management of the school, the same shall, previous to its being acted upon, be submitted to, and approved by, a majority of the subscribers specially convened for that purpose.

N. B. Every subscriber of ten guineas, or of one guinea per annum, will be entitled (this year) to send two boys, and so in proportion. The committee request the subscribers to nominate their children as soon as convenient.

## SCHOOL FOR NATIONAL EDUCATION.

Some gentlemen of the town and neighborhood, and particularly the clergy of the established church, conceiving Mr. Lancaster's plan to be deficient, in-asmuch as it did not inculcate on the minds of the children any peculiar system of religion, determined to establish a school on doctor Bell's plan of education; in which, together with reading, writing, and arithmetic, the children should be taught the church catechism, and be brought up in the tenets of the established church, exclusive of all others.

For carrying this plan into effect, a committee was appointed, who soon after convened a meeting of the subscribers, to be held at Reading, on the 18th of April 1812, which was numerously attended, when the following particulars were resolved unanimously:

"1. That it is highly expedient that a society be here constituted, for the purpose of promoting the education of poor children, in this part of the diocese of Salisbury, by instructing them in suitable learning, and above all, in the

principles of the christian religion, according to the doctrine and discipline of CHAP. the church of England: and that this society be carried on in general conformity with the plans of the national society, in London, and in correspondence with that body.

- " 2. That this society will, to the utmost of its power, assist any neighboring parishes, which may need such assistance, in the erection or enlarging of school-rooms, and in other matters relative to this design, so as to enable them to conduct the education of children, according to the plan above-mentioned.
- " 3. That the funds of this society shall be under the management of a committee, any five of whom shall be competent to act; and that this committee shall, from time to time, make such rules and regulations as shall seem to them expedient, to forward the designs of the society. But that such rules and regulations shall not take effect, 'till they shall have been approved by the patron, president, and three of the vice-presidents of this society.
- " 4. That the right reverend the lord bishop of Salisbury be appointed the patron of this society.
- " 5. That the most noble the marquis of Blandford be requested to undertake the office of president. To which request the marquis has already communicated his assent.
- " 6. That the very reverend the dean of Worcester, archdeacon of Berks, be appointed a vice-president; and that the several rural deans, and all dignified clergymen, being subscribers to this society, be also vice-presidents. The following gentlemen, also, being present, accepted the same office:

Sir Nathaniel Dukinfield, bart.

Sir Moris Ximenes, knt.

John Blagrave, esq.

Edward Golding, esq.

Thomas Neate, esq.

- " Also, that the mayor and aldermen of this borough, being subscribers, shall be vice-presidents, and that application be made to other noblemen and gentlemen, who may be likely to accept the office.
- "7. That the patron, president, vice-presidents, and all persons subscribing not less than two guineas a year, or making a donation of five guineas and being also annual subscribers, and likewise all beneficed clergy, in the deanery of Reading, being subscribers to this society, or to the national society in London, shall be members of the acting committee.
- " 8. That John Blandy, esq. of Reading, be appointed treasurer of this society.
- " 9. That the reverend archdeacon Nares, vicar of St. Mary's, Reading, be appointed secretary.

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" 10. That the committee, as above appointed, shall meet for the dispatch of business, when the proposed lay vice-presidents shall have accepted the office.

"11. That books be opened for the receipt of benefactions, and annual subscriptions, to be placed to the account of the treasurer, at the two banks in Reading.

" 12. That the thanks of this meeting be given to the chairman.

(Signed) "R. NARES, chairman and secretary."

At the close of the meeting, the sum of four hundred and twenty-four pounds were subscribed for the current expences of the establishment, and one hundred and three pounds nine shillings in annual payments for its support.

With this sum the committee erected two spacious rooms within the walls of the great hall in the abbey, sufficient to contain from three to four hundred children; at the east end, apartments are fitted up for the residence of the master and mistress; and, however much antiquaries may regret this distigurement of the finest and most perfect remains of this once beautiful abbey, it must be allowed it could not have been employed to a better purpose. The plan of this school differs from that of the Lancastrian, in as much as it provides for the education of female children, which the other does not, and is so far preferable; in other respects, the mode of instruction is nearly similar.

Whether Dr. Bell, or Mr. Lancaster, was the inventor of this simple plan of education, is of little consequence to the public, but for the benefits derived from its adoption, they are equally indebted to both these gentlemen, by whose industry and perseverance, schools are establishing in every part of the kingdom, which promise to confer the greatest blessing on this country it has, perhaps, ever experienced, by producing a total change in the manners and conduct of the rising generation among the poor.

This school was opened on the 6th of September, 1813, when nearly one hundred children were admitted.

## Representation.

#### CHAPTER XI.

"READING," says Brown Willis, "has always sent two members to parliament, without at any time pleading exception, notwithstanding the great power of its abbots, which sheltered all the great parliamentary abbey towns, before the reign of Henry VIII." But he does not inform us in whom the right of election was vested; whether in the corporation alone, or, with them, in common with the freemen or inhabitants.

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The following statement, collected from the archives of the town, will therefore, we trust, be acceptable to our readers:

In the early period of parliamentary representation, the right of election was, most probably, vested in the freemen of the town, they being most interested in the laws about to be made; and accordingly we find their chief magistrate was generally returned by them, for one of their representatives; not as an honor intended to be conferred upon him, but as a duty he was bound to perform, for the preservation of their rights and liberties, as citizens.

This right appears to have been exercised by them, as late as the year 1504, at which time "electi fuerant in officium burgensium parliamenti Ricardus Smith, et Carolus Nicholas per omnes comburgenses tune ibidem existentes," Here we see the members are expressly said to have been chosen by all the coburgesses, (freemen) at that time in the town; how much longer this right remained exclusively in the coburgesses is uncertain, but from the return of the precept, the thirty-eighth of Henry VIII. 1545, it appears that all the inhabitants, as well freemen as others, did then vote for the two members, and so it is expressly mentioned in the following extract from the indenture between the parties on the occasion:

"INDENTURE inter Johannem Bourne, majorem burgi de Radynge, in comitatu Berks, burgenses, et comitatus burgi, ex una parte, &c. testat quod predictus major, burgenses et comitatus burgi, predicti unanimiter con-

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gregati, ordinarunt, clegerunt, et nominarunt Thomas Vatchell et Roger Amyce, dicti burgi, burgenses parliamenti."\*

It is observable, from this indenture, that though they might not always return the chief magistrate of the town, yet they did not look beyond it for the choice of their representatives. Both the members on this occasion being expressly mentioned as inhabitants of the borough. Indeed the neighboring gentlemen, instead of soliciting the suffrages of the people at this time, appear to have cautiously avoided taking on themselves an office, which however honorable to the individual, was, from the caprice and tyranny of the prince, always attended with difficulty and danger. This custom of choosing their representatives from among themselves, gradually obtained the force of law on the minds of the inhabitants, so that when strangers, as they were called, first solicited the honor of representing the borough, it was considered a gross innovation on the ancient practice, and dangerous to the interest of the electors. In the early ages of the representation, it was customary to allow the members a certain stipend, according to the number of days they were summoned to attend in parliament; this sum never exceeded two shillings each per diem, and was, at the time, little more than four times the wages of the meanest laborer; of so little value was at that time a seat in the house, now considered one of the most honorable distinctions that can be conferred on a commoner.

Notwithstanding the wages of the members were so very moderate, the corporation found a difficulty in raising the money to pay them, at the end of the sessions; several instances of this sort occur in the diaries, from among which the following is extracted:

"Att this day, forasmuch as Mr. Bell, being maior, was at thyse time one of the burgesses for the parliament, for the borough, begun the twentie-first daie of October, in the yere above written, and continued unto the dissolution of the same parliament, whych was the nineteenth daie of December then nexte, that is to wit, fiftie daies; and whereas evrie of the saide burgesses ought to have for one daie, endureinge the saide parliament, two shyllyngs; yet neverthelesse, the saide maior, see beinge burgess for the said parliament, is contented to remitte and forgette, the saide sum, and to take but onlie twentie shyllyngs, which twentie shyllyngs to be borne and paide by the burgesses of

<sup>\*</sup> This indenture made between John Bourne, mayor of the borough of Radynge, in the county of Berks, the burgesses and commonalty of the borough, on the one part, &c. witnesseth, that the said mayor, burgesses, and commonalty, unanimously assembled, have ordained, chosen, and named Thomas Vatchell, and Roger Amyce, of the said borough, burgesses of parliament.

the saide hall; \* to wit, for one burgess of the chayre, † eighte pence, and for one other burgesse, six-pence, although the charge ought, of righte, to bee borne and payde by the inhabitants of the borough."

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It may be observed here, that the expence incurred in this case, was to have been paid by the inhabitants at large, had not the above compromise taken place, and is a further proof that the commonalty had voted at the preceding election, else it would be difficult to conjecture, how they could be liable to contribute towards the pay of persons who had not been submitted to their choice.

This difficulty in raising the money for paying the wages of the representatives, prepared the way for those innovations on the right of election, which soon afterwards followed; for, on the appointment of the high stewards, by the charter of Henry VII. the persons who afterwards filled that office requested the privilege of nominating one of the members, on condition of exonerating the town from the payment of his wages, which was readily complied with, and the same custom continued for nearly a century.

In 1623, the earl of Wallingford, being high steward of the borough, after exercising his privilege, by nominating sir Francis Knollys, requested the corporation, by letter, to return also sir Robert Knollys, they being his relations; this they so far complied with, as to put them in nomination, but sir Francis only was returned, as appears from the following poll, conducted in much the same manner as the election of parish officers.

There were four candidates, and the number of votes for each; were as follows, the corporation alone being the electors:

Sir Francis Knollys, senr.

Sir Robert Knollys,

Sir Richard Lydall,

Sir John Saunders, recorder,

On this occasion the following agreement was drawn up, and entered in the diary; but, as it is not signed by the successful candidates, it was probably done without their knowledge prior to the election, and refused to be signed by them afterwards:

"Seeing that the mayor and burgesses have chosen me to be one of their burgesses for the next parliament, I do hereby promise and agree to bear mine own charges in that service, and that the same mayor and burgesses shall stand

<sup>\*</sup> The burgesses of the hall formed a more immediate part of the corporation; the others were only so denominated, from being free of some of the companies.

<sup>+</sup> Those who had served the office of mayor.

CHAP. XI. clear and be acquitted of and from the payment of any wages or duties payable in this business."

This is the first instance I have met with wherein the corporation alone returned the members: how long they had previously exercised this right, I have not been able to discover; nor can I conjecture what gave rise to the innovation, unless it was to relieve the commonalty from their share of the expence incurred, by sending their representatives to parliament. But however this may be, we find, on the present occasion, the corporation were as desirous as the people to get rid of the burthen if possible all together; and though they did not succeed in their first attempt, they did not loose sight of their object; for at the election which took place in the following year, they say, "that having received the sheriff's precept for the electing of two burgesses for this borough, and likewise letters from the right honorable lord Wallingford (high steward) concerning the choosing of the burgesses, &c. which were openly read and respected, the mayor and burgesses, according to their warrant, did name these two to be burgesses, viz. Sir Francis Knollys and Mr. John Saunders, esq." and then follows the agreement, nearly in the same terms as before

"Seeing that the said mayor and burgesses, at my request, have named and chosen me, sir Francis Knollys, jun. to be one of their burgesses for the next parliament, &c. I do hereby promise, grant and agree to be, appear, and attend, in the said next parliament, at mine own proper costs and charges, and that the said mayor and burgesses shall, at all times, be clear and acquitted, and discharged of and from the payment of any wages, fees, or duties payable to me in that behalf."

"Fran: Knollys."

Another agreement to the same purport was signed by Mr. Saunders.

Though from this period the custom of paying their representatives ceased, yet it was usual, for a long time afterwards, for the corporation, at the end of the sessions, to make them a present of some sugar loaves, which, from their novelty, perhaps, at the time, more than their value, were considered a respectable mark of acknowledgment from the donors. Accordingly, in 1640, the following order for this purpose is entered in the diary:

"Ordered, that sir Francis Knollys, sen. and sir Francis Knollys, jun. should be presented with sugar loaves to the value of forty shillings at least." And in 1646 "it was agreed to present Mr. Ball with a good sugar loaf, a pottle of sack, and a pottle of claret:" But these trifling tokens of gratitude towards their representatives, have long been laid aside; and the consciousness of having acted with upright intentions and clean hands in the fulfilment

of their duties, is the only recompense they now receive, in return for their arduous services.

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Though the corporation willingly consented to allow their high stewards the privilege of nominating one of their representatives, while they confined their choice to the town and neighborhood, yet they were so impressed with the conviction, that none other ought to be admitted to represent them, that when a stranger was attempted to be forced upon them, for the first time, by their high steward, notwithstanding their former abject agreement, they refused to comply with the request, and returned, as they pointedly observed, "their own neighbours." This happened in 1627, in the case of sir John Brooke, who had been recommended by the earl of Banbury, at that time high steward, "to be one of the burgesses of this corporation in the parliament, &c. but he being a stranger, it was agreed that a letter should be written to his lordship, requesting that we may continue our neighbours, who at the last parliament were recommended by his honour." After waiting fourteen days for the earl's answer, the mayor and burgesses, on the 18th of February, assembled again, and "having read his lordship's letter and the answer to it, it was the opinion of the whole company, that the earl was therein satisfied, having received no letter from him since, and so proceeded to the election, and chose their former members." This exercise of their just right, so offended the earl that he immediately sent in his resignation; at the same time requesting them to choose the earl of Holland in his place, " which was by all the company thankfully embraced."

However, notwithstanding the corporation in this case had exerted a proper spirit in resisting the mandate of their high steward, yet when archbishop Laud soon after requested them to return Edward Herbert, esq. the king's solicitor, who was likewise a stranger, they almost unanimously complied with his request, only six of their body having had the courage to resist this undue use of court influence, alleging "that being a stranger, he could be no friend to the town." At the same time, and probably under the same influence, they chose sir John Berkley, knt. who was also a stranger, at the request of the earl of Holland, their high steward; thus courting the favor of the archbishop, by the abandonment of a principle they had so lately determined not to depart from. So dangerous it is for the election of the members to be confided to few hands, and those too a corporate body, the majority of whom have mostly the same views and the same interest, and, from the

Силр. XI. smallness of their number, are easily biassed, either from party motives, or lucrative remunerations, to forsake the true interest of the people at large.

In 1645, when the corporation was freed from the influence of archbishop Laud, at that time a prisoner in the tower, an attempt was made to revive the principle; for one Mr. Ball, "a stranger, having requested to be made a burgess, or to be admitted a freeman of the borough, to qualify him to be put in nomination, he was answered, that the number of burgesses was full, and that they did not admit freemen, save only tradesmen "The custom is now to admit either, indifferently; by which means, instead of being confined to the small enclosure of our own borough, we enjoy the advantage of choosing our representatives from the great stock of wealth, integrity, and abilities of the whole country.

This opposition to Mr. Ball's request might perhaps originate in the violence of party; the king's troops had just capitulated to the parliament's forces, under Essex, and his friends here enraged at loosing their preponderance, might, on this occasion, have exerted all their influence to return a member of their own party. Mr. Ball was the gentleman fixed upon for this purpose; and, though a stranger, was cordially received by the mayor, at the head of the court party, by whose assistance, notwithstanding their former answer, he was not only admitted a burgess, but was also supported at the election by the mayor, in so unconstitutional a manner, as to occasion the inhabitants to petition the house of commons against the return.\*

As this is the first instance of a controverted election for this borough on record, the following particulars of the case, extracted from the diary, may not be unacceptable to the reader, as it throws some light on the manner in which elections were conducted in those days, and as being the first, after a lapse of several years, wherein the people were reinstated in their right of voting for their members, notwithstanding the opposition of the mayor and his party.

"On November the twenty-fourth 1645, another writ was received from the sheriff, to elect one burgess for sir Francis Knollys, with an order of parliament with direction for the election, when the corporation proceeded to the

<sup>\*</sup> There is some obscurity attending this election: Whitelock says, "on November 17, 1645, the election of Mr. Tanfield Vatchell for Reading was declared to be void, for miscarriage, and denying the poll, and a new election to be there." Probably there had been a prior contest between the same parties, as the writ for this election was not received here till the 24th of the same month, and Mr. Vatchell, after this election, was permitted to take his seat in the house. There seems, indeed, to have been a writ sent down, prior to this, on the 6th of November, but what was done in it is not mentioned, perhaps it was on this first application, that they refused to admit Mr. Ball to his freedom.

2 Corporation Diary.

election with the commonalty, putting Mr. Vatchell and Mr. Ball in nomination; after the votes\* on either part, with unanimous consent, they proceeded to polling, which held them in work till about four of the afternoon, and after the polling was ended, it was made known and declared, that the number of votes for Mr. Vatchell was five hundred and sixty, and for Mr. Ball three hundred and nine, and night being come, the inhabitants departed for that time.

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- "The first of December the company being informed that Mr. Mayor, and Mr. Ball and his party, the last night, by candle light, met in the town-hall, and there formed an indenture, and signed and sealed it, for the return of Mr. Ball, as chosen burgess for the parliament. The following questions were put:
- "Ist. Whether the company would take into consideration the casting out of the names of them that voted for either party upon their exceptions?
  - "Resolved, that they would not, neither had they power so to do.
  - "2d. Whether at the election Mr. Vatchell had most votes?
- "Resolved, that Mr. Vatchell had a majority of two hundred and fifty votes.
- "3d. Whether the judgement should be returned, under the town seal, for Mr. Vatchell, or Mr. Ball?
- "Resolved, that it should be speedily returned for Mr. Vatchell, whose right it was.
- "4th. Whether the company are of opinion that the delay of Mr. Mayor in sealing the indenture now tendered, and in doing Mr. Vatchell justice, will prove prejudicial?
- "Resolved, they are of opinion, that it will be prejudicial to the parliament, to this company, to the town, and to Mr. Vatchell.
- "The indenture was afterwards tendered by Mr. Vatchell to the mayor and company, to sign and seal the same for his dispatch to the parliament, which indenture was signed, sealed, and delivered to the sheriff's use, and afterwards taken up by Mr. Mayor, who carried away the same, and promised to return that to the company within two or three days, which was not done.
- "The next day Mr. Vatchell again requested Mr. Mayor to do him justice, and to return the indenture concerning his election, which Mr. Mayor delayed, by saying, he would consider of it; and after much time spent, he said, he would return the one and the other; by Mr. William Bellchamber,

<sup>\*</sup> Shew of hands.

<sup>+</sup> By the company, is meant those of the corporation who were then present.

± Both the indentures.

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which the company refused, for that he was for Mr. Ball; and, at last, after more time spent, he said he would return the indentures himself; whereupon, the company present protested against the act done by the mayor on Mr. Ball's behalf, and said, Mr. Mayor should loose his fee for so doing, without their consent and agreement. Thereupon the company did rise, and did order and agree to petition the house of commons concerning this business, and to certify the proceedings thereof. Mr. Mayor went home; the rest of the company staid, and framed their petition, then sent to Mr. Mayor, to come to the hall to acquaint him with the contents thereof, who sent word he would consider of it; after some distance of time, they sent again to him, and then he came and demanded of them, by what authority they sent for him? they said, to acquaint him with what they had done; and so, he turned himself about, and went his way; and afterwards they signed the petition."

"To the right honourable the house of commons in parliament assembled.

"The humble petition of the aldermen and burgesses of the borough of Reading, humbly sheweth—

"That, whereas, the mayor and aldermen received a precept from the sheriff of the county of Berks, bearing date the 24th of November 1645, requiring them to choose a burgess of parliament for the said borough, instead of sir Francis Knollys the younger deceased, in pursuance whereof due notice was given to the *inhabitants* of the said borough, to attend service upon Monday December the first 1645, at the town-hall in Reading aforesaid, where, after the votes were given for each party, the poll was desired by Tanfield Vatchell and William Ball, esqrs. that so the election, where it fell, might be clear and unquestionable.

"After the poll was ended, the votes were numbered by the mayor and aldermen; the number of votes for Mr. Vatchell being 560, and the number for Mr. Ball 309, and no more. Thereupon the mayor and aldermen put it to the question, in their council chamber, for whom the indenture should be returned? Resolved, for Mr. Vatchell, to whom the right (without all peradventure) belongs.

"Yet, notwithstanding, the mayor of the town giving his vote for Mr. Ball, although he has confessed that he is convinced in his judgement and conscience that 'tis Mr. Vatchell's right by the greater number of voices, and thereupon did sign, seal, and deliver the indenture to the use of the sheriff, for Mr. Vatchell, yet, by the persuasion of a discontented party in the town, who (as we conceive) resolve never to be satisfied, keeps the said indenture in his hands, protracting time, on purpose, (as we are informed) 'till Mr. Ball

can take some exceptions against Mr. Vatchell's party, although there are more exceptions, or as many, as we conceive, to be taken against Mr. Ball's, insomuch that the division in town grows so high, that we fear the consequences thereof will be very sad.

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"These premises considered, the petitioners humbly desire your honours would take the whole carriage of the business into your consideration; and that the mayor (for prevention of further mischief) may be compelled to shew cause (if he can) why he retards the doing of justice, keeping the indenture in his hands on purpose to cross Mr. Vatchell, who is a gentleman that the town and country have reason to honour for his constant adhering to the parliament in the cause of the gospel. All which, notwithstanding, we most humbly submit to your honours most grave wisdom and judgement, and your petitioners, &c."

We are not informed, either in the above otherwise minute statement of facts, or in the petition itself, on what grounds the mayor founded his exceptions to Mr. Vatchell's votes, or what were their nature; but, if we consider the very great majority in favor of that gentleman, we must be convinced that the question turned upon some great constitutional point, the decision whereof alone could have afforded him any prospect of setting aside the return. This was probably founded on the distinction between free burgesses and inhabit-A long period had elapsed since the former had been called upon to exercise their prescriptive right of election, and the civil war, now raging, had overturned all former distinctions, so that it is no wonder if the inhabitants at large should conceive themselves entitled to vote, or that the mayor should wish to bring back the right to its ancient limits. This appears the more likely, as the petition expressly states, that due notice was given to the nhabitants to attend service, instead of the freemen, who, had they voted alone, would not have amounted to more than half the number on the poll. In consequence of this petition, Mr. Vatchell was declared duly elected, thereby fixing the right of election, as it should appear, in the householders, and not in the freemen as it had formerly been.

This decision, however, was of no immediate consequence, as the representative system was now about to undergo greater changes than any it had hitherto experienced. In 1649, his excellency, general lord Fairfax, with the council of officers belonging to the army under his command, presented a petition to the parliament, "for an agreement of the people," together with some regulations for new modelling future parliaments. By these, the number of the members were reduced to four hundred, divided among the counties and principal boroughs in certain proportions, according to which the "county

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By this agreement, the electors were to be natives of England not receiving alms, nor servants receiving wages, but house-keepers dwelling within their respective districts. The parliament was to dissolve itself on the last day of April, and all the elections were to take place on the first Thursday in May following; but this plan did not take place till after Cromwell had assumed the reins of government, who, having dissolved the long parliament in 1653, soon after summoned a new one, which was called Barebones, or the convention parliament; but, as the members were all nominated by himself, no elections took place, and consequently no regular return could be made. It is impossible to say, with certainty, who was the representative for this place; but it is very probable that it was colonel Hammond, one of his creatures, and at that time governor of the town.

On the resignation of the convention, Cromwell adopted the mode of election pointed out by Fairfax and the council of officers, except, that in the instrument of government, as it is called, one member for Abingdon was added to the number for the county of Berks, and the qualification for an elector was restricted to the possession of property to the amount of two hundred pounds.

This election took place in 1654, when colonel Hammond was returned for this town. In 1656 the corporation received a precept from Cromwell, to choose one member for the borough, and the election being fixed for the 14th of July, it was then conducted with that religious enthusiasm so characteristic of the age, when no business, however foreign from the subject of religion, could be transacted without first seeking the Lord, as it was called, by exhortation and prayer. Accordingly, we find, that, on the day fixed, " the company, with the ministers, and divers other people, assembled in the townhall, to seek God for a blessing, in their choice\* of a burgess, for this borough, to serve in parliament; and Mr. Jemmatt and Mr. Ford performed the duties of exhortation and prayer for that purpose. The exercises being done, the company went into the council chamber, and upon debate pitched upon sir John Barksteade, knt. lieutenant of the Tower, to be put in election for the

<sup>\*</sup> This pretence of seeking God to direct their choice, could be nothing more than a religious mockery, as it does not appear they had any alternative in their choice, there being no opposition, and even if there had, we are informed by Ludlow, "that to prevent the election of any that were disaffected to the court, letters were dispatched to all parts of England, to give notice, that it would be resented, and they were too well acquainted with Cromwell's character, to hesitate one moment in their choice."

corporation, and then Mr. Mayor went into the hall, and acquainted the people therewith." Such was the gloomy solemnity with which this solitary member was elected for Cromwell's last parliament.

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At the restoration, the right of electing two members was restored to the town; but the qualification of an elector not having been properly defined, lodgers and inmates, under the name of pot-wabblers, intruded themselves at subsequent elections, whereby the number of voters was rapidly encreased beyond any former example, as we find in 1678, when the number of voters tor each candidate was as follows:

| John Blagrave, esq.   |   | - |     | m - | 927  |
|-----------------------|---|---|-----|-----|------|
| Nathan Knight, esq.   | - |   | -   |     | 766  |
| Thomas Vatchell, esq. |   | - |     | con | 426  |
| Sir William Kendrick, | - |   | 130 |     | 384  |
|                       |   |   |     |     |      |
|                       |   |   |     |     | 2503 |

This practice having occasioned great dissentions among the inhabitants, at the subsequent elections, the corporation, at the commencement of the last century, endeavored to counteract its influence by the following bye law, which they ordered to be entered on their journals, as a means of asserting the right of giving their sanction, by a previous nomination of such candidates as they thought proper objects for the choice of the people:

"October 22, 1705, it is likewise the opinion of the board, that, for the time to come, the mayor, aldermen, and burgesses, in their common council, in case of members of parliament for this borough, do first determine and resolve amongst themselves, who shall be deemed fit representatives for that purpose."

But it does not appear that this bye law ever took effect, as the right of election continued the same till 1714, when, in consequence of a petition of the inhabitants paying scot and lot, to the house of commons, against the return of Felix Calvert and Robert Clarges, esqrs. it was resolved by the house, that the right of election of burgesses to serve in parliament for the borough of Reading, in the county of Berks, is in the inhabitants only, paying scot and lot.<sup>2</sup> Accordingly they annulled the election, by the following resolutions:

"Resolved, that Robert Clarges, esq is not duly elected a burgess to serve in the present parliament for the borough of Reading.

"Resolved, that Felix Calvert, esq. is not duly elected a burgess to serve in this present parliament for the said borough of Reading.

<sup>4</sup> Corporation Diary.

<sup>2</sup> Votes of the Commons.

CHAP. XI. "Resolved, that William Cadogan, esq. is not duly elected a burgess to serve in this present parliament for the said borough of Reading.

"And Mr. Speaker was ordered to issue his warrant for making a new writ for the electing two burgesses to serve in the present parliament for the borough of Reading, in the room of Robert Clarges and Felix Calvert, esqrs. whose election for the said borough has been declared void."

This decision of the house, in favor of the inhabitants paying scot and lot, has been observed ever since. This has considerably reduced the number of electors, so that at the contested election in 1802, only 643 polled.—This diminution had been increasing for several years, through the operation of the poor's laws, whereby every person receiving relief from the parish to which he belongs, is excluded from the privilege of voting at elections. But, at the election in 1812, such of the poorer housekeepers as had not paid up their rates, and even those who had been struck off the books, by having the word poor set against their names, were admitted to vote on paying their arrears. It was also determined at this election, that persons occasionally resident in the town, and paying scot and lot, were good voters: and one of doctor Valpy's assistants was allowed to vote (though at the time only a lodger) for a house he had lately resided in, but for which the doctor was the real tenant and paid the taxes.

From the above statement of facts, it appears, that the right of election here has received considerable changes, from the first institution of regular parliaments, in the reign of Edward I. to the commencement of the last century. At first, the elective franchise was in the freemen of the borough, or such as were free of some of the five companies of which the guildmerchant were for a long time composed. During this period, the members were paid for their services by the free burgesses at large, though, in some few instances, the expenses of the representatives were paid by the corporate body; and, as the natural consequence of the representative system, the master of the gild was generally, if not always, one of the members; the other was elected from among the principal inhabitants of the town or neighborhood. After the dissolution of the monastery, and the subsequent appointment of high stewards, we find those noblemen (for such they generally were) covenanting with the borough for the privilege of nominating one of the members, on condition of relieving the town from the expense of paying the wages of such representatives. This was no doubt done, with a view to parliamentary interest on the part of the high stewards, and seems to have been assented to, by the electors, as a relief from what they considered a great burthen. This innovation in the elective franchise, soon after led to another, arising from the same cause; for the electors having thus been relieved from the expense attending one of their representatives, were easily prevailed upon to give up their choice of the other to the corporate body, on the same terms, so that the election of both the members became vested in the corporation alone, though the right of nominating one remained in the high steward.

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We are not certain at what time this alteration first took place, but it was probably some time in the reign of Henry VIII. or soon after, and continued to be observed till the civil war, in the reign of Charles I. during which time, as well as in the former period, the representatives were always chosen from among themselves, or near neighbors.

Among the changes which took place in this town, during the contest between Charles I. and the parliament, the alteration made in the elective ranchise was not the least considerable. The electors, being no longer obliged to pay the wages of their representatives, the freemen reassumed the right, they had formerly conceded to the corporate body, of electing their own representatives, but as the exclusive privileges attached to the guildmerchant, were becoming every day of less value, and were consequently neglected, few persons thinking it worth while to take up their freedom, the inhabitants at large appear to have claimed the same privilege, which brought on the contest, in 1645, between Mr. Vatchell, a native of the town, and Mr. Ball, who was a stranger. On the day of election the former gentleman had the greater number of votes including non freemen, the latter, of the freemen. This occasioned a double return to be made to the house of commons, who, by deciding in favor of Mr. Vatchell, extended the right of voting for members to those who were not freemen. This determination of the house was productive of another change in the mode of election; as, soon after the restoration, we find pot-wabblers, or lodgers, exercising the right of voting for the representatives, and the practice of admitting candidates from every part of the kingdom became general; any one who desired it being readily admitted a burgess by the corporation. This claim of the inhabitants at large to vote for representatives of the borough, appears never to have been sanctioned either by charter, or by any decision of the house of commons, and may be considered rather as an usurpation quietly acquiesced in, 'till, from the violent conduct of the lower class of electors, on every election, the house of commons was obliged to interfere, and, by their decision in 1714, to fix the right of election in the house-keepers paying scot and lot; since which time the elections here have been conducted with more decency, and the objects of their choice been men of the greatest integrity, loyalty, and independence.

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# A List of all the Burgesses who have served in Parliament for the Borough of Reading.

\*A\* Those marked with an asterisk were masters of the guild-merchant, 'till the reign of Henry VII. after which period they were mayors, or such as had passed the chair. Those in italics are not in Brown Willis's list, but are taken from the diaries.

## Edward the First.

|              |        | $E_0$        | dward the First.                           |
|--------------|--------|--------------|--------------------------------------------|
| Anno<br>1005 | Regni. | Westminster, | Geoffry de Engleys, Elias de Baringby.     |
| 1295         | 29     | Lincoln,     | Thomas Siward, Thomas de Leycestre.        |
|              | 30     | London,      | Walter Gerrard, William Bonenfaunt.        |
|              |        | ·            | John de Akatur, William Bonenfaunt.        |
|              | 33     | Westminster, | Adam de Pulatur, Thomas Siward.            |
|              | 34     | C 1' 1       |                                            |
|              | .35    | Carlisle,    | Thomas de Farle, Thomas de Ardene.         |
| 1307         |        |              | lward the Second.                          |
|              | I      | Northampton, | Thomas Siward, John Siward.                |
|              | 2      | Westminster, | William Bonenfant, Thomas Siward.          |
|              | 4      |              | Henry le Greywell, Adam le Pulatur.        |
|              | 5      | London,      | The same.                                  |
|              | 5      | Westminster, | The same.                                  |
|              | 6      |              | Roger Cousin, John de Stokes.              |
|              | 7      |              | The same.                                  |
|              | .8     |              | Henry de Worcester, William le Peynteur.   |
|              | 8      |              | Adam le Palmer, William Tilktero.          |
|              | 12     | York,        | Adam le Horner, John de Stoke.             |
|              | 12     |              | Thomas Langton, John Buckhorne.            |
|              | 15     |              | Adam le Horner, Walter Beyvyn.             |
|              | 16     | Westminster, | Nicholas atte Heath, John de Aldermanston. |
|              | 17     |              | John Siward, John de Stow.                 |
|              | 19     |              | John Lakatour, John Siward.                |
| 1327         |        | E            | Edward the Third.                          |
|              | 4      | York,        | William de Wyttenham, John Aunger.         |
|              | :1     | Lincoln,     | Richard Wytote, Henry Wycestre.            |
|              | 2      | York,        | William de Wyttenham, Richard Wytote.      |
|              | 3      | Northampton, | John Aunger, Henry de Wycestre.            |
|              | 4      | Winchester,  | Adam le Horner, Richard Wytote.            |
|              | 4      | Westminster, | William Wyttenham, John de Pangbournc,     |
|              | 7      |              | John le Goldsmith, William de Wyttenham.   |
|              | .8     | York,        | The same.                                  |
|              | 9      |              | John le Goldsmith, Hugh Ughtred.           |
|              |        |              | , 5 - 5 7                                  |

| 1336 | Regni | at Westminster.    | Henry Foliot. John Aunger. CHAP.               |
|------|-------|--------------------|------------------------------------------------|
|      | 10    |                    | The same.                                      |
|      | 11    | a Council,         | J. de Aldremaston, H. Foliot, Walter Staunton. |
|      | 11    |                    | John le Harpere, John Aunger.                  |
|      | 12    |                    | Adam le Horner, John Aunger.                   |
|      | 12    |                    | Thomas de Oseneye, John Aunger.                |
|      |       | -                  | David de Breghenock, John Aunger.              |
|      | 14    |                    | Adam le Horner, John Stokes.                   |
|      | 14    |                    | William Wyttenham, John Aunger.                |
|      | 15    |                    | John Caplach, John Aunger.                     |
|      | 17    | 1 1                | John Siward, John de Stoke.                    |
|      | 21    |                    | John Stratfield, Thomas Yevedon.               |
|      | 22    | ه.                 | Thomas Yevedon, John Stratfield.               |
|      | 24    |                    | Ralph de Cornwall, William Spenser.            |
|      | 25    |                    | The same.                                      |
|      | 29    |                    | Thomas atte Garston, Thomas Helveldresth.      |
|      | 31    |                    | William Ward, Walter Whatemore.                |
|      | 34    | •                  | The same.                                      |
|      | 34    |                    | William Ward, Thomas Clerk.                    |
|      | 36    |                    | William Ward, Henry le Rover.                  |
|      | 37    | 51                 | William Ward, John Fowles.                     |
|      | 38    |                    | Thomas Mortmayne, John Wymondle.               |
|      | 39    |                    | John Farham, Thomas Mittayne.                  |
|      | 42    |                    | William Throp, William atte Grove.             |
|      | 43    |                    | William Cate, Henry Roper.                     |
|      |       | Counc. Winchester, |                                                |
|      | 46    | Parliament,        | Henry Roper, John atte Hyde.                   |
|      | 50    |                    | Reginald Sheffield, John Goldory.              |
| 1377 |       | Ric                | hard the Second.                               |
|      | 1     | Winchester,        | William Catour, David atte Heath.              |
|      | 1     | Westminster,       | Thomas Smith, Henry Ropere.                    |
|      | 2     | Gloucester,        | Walter Read, David atte Heath.                 |
|      | 3     | Westminster,       | William Dauntsey, Richard Solham.              |
|      | 5     | -                  | John Kent, William Derby.                      |
|      | 6     |                    | John Hunt, Richard Glovere.                    |
|      | 7     | Newcastle,         | John Kent, mercer, † Thomas Drover.            |

<sup>†</sup> From this accidental mention of Mr. Kent's business, it seems probable that most in the above list, if not all, were tradesmen residing in the town.

| C          |       |                                         |                                     |
|------------|-------|-----------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| CHAP. 1384 | Regni | at New Sarum,                           | John Balet, Richard Burton.         |
| A1.        | 8     | Westminster,                            | Henry Barbour, Walter atte Green.   |
|            | 9     |                                         | Thomas Smith, John Doublet.         |
|            | 10    |                                         | Robert atte Lee, William Stapper.   |
|            | 11    |                                         | David atte Hatche, Richard Bedull.  |
|            | 12    | Cambridge,                              | John Balet, Nicholas Fachell.       |
|            | 13    | Westminster,                            | John Kent, Robert Cuppolade.        |
|            | 15    |                                         | Henry Barbour, John Doublet.        |
|            | 18    |                                         | William Shortwade, John Ide.        |
| 1399       |       | H                                       | enry the Fourth.                    |
|            | 1     |                                         | Robert Hay, John Hunt.              |
|            | 8     | 1,                                      | John Merkham, William Kennett.      |
|            | 11    |                                         | John White, Alexander Collshull.    |
| 1413       |       | ,                                       | Henry the Fifth.                    |
| 1110       | 1     | •                                       | William Wynton, Richard Farley.     |
|            | 2     | Leicester,                              | Thomas Hastinges, John Clerke.      |
|            | 3     | Westminster,                            | Thomas Levington, William Mustard.  |
|            | 5     | ** ************************************ | Stephen Strapping, John Puecote.    |
|            | 7     |                                         | Philip Richards, John Hunt.         |
|            | ·     |                                         | *Robert Morys,‡ Richard Crowe.      |
|            | 8     |                                         | Thomas Levington, *John Veyre.      |
|            | 9     |                                         | John Hunt, William King.            |
| 1422       |       |                                         | Henry the Sixth.                    |
|            | 1     |                                         | Thomas Levington, *Simon Porter.    |
|            | 2     | Westminster,                            | Thomas Levington, William Wilton.   |
|            | 3     | .,,                                     | Thomas Levington, *Simon Porter.    |
|            | 4     | Leicester,                              | John Barton, *Thomas Swayne.        |
|            | 6     | Westminster,                            | Thomas Levington, *William Barbour. |
|            | 8     |                                         | Thomas Levington, *John Kirkby.     |
|            | 9     |                                         | William Baron, Thomas Levington.    |
|            | 11    |                                         | *John Kirkby, *Simon Porter.        |
|            | 13    |                                         | Thomas Levington, *Simon Porter.    |
|            | 15    | Cambridge,                              | *Simon Porter, *John Kirkby.        |
|            | 18    | Westminster,                            | Henry Cleche, William Justice.      |
|            | 20    |                                         | Thomas Levington, *Robert Moris     |
|            |       |                                         | -                                   |

+ Others say this parliament was held at Reading.

<sup>†</sup> Those marked with an asterisk in this reign, were only masters of the guild, not mayors; that title was not conferred on the head of the corporation 'till the next reign.

| Anno | Regui       |                                               | C            |
|------|-------------|-----------------------------------------------|--------------|
| 1447 | Regui<br>25 | at Westminster, Simon Kent, Simon Ladbrook.   | CHAP.<br>XI. |
|      | 27          | The same.                                     | ~            |
|      | 28          | Simon Kent, * Thomas Clerk, draper, mayor.    |              |
|      | 29          | *Thomas Beke, John Orpyd.                     |              |
|      | 31          | Reading, *William Rede, John Penicock.†       |              |
|      | 38          | Westminster, *Thomas Beke, *William Perncote. |              |
|      | 39          | John Prowyght, *William Perncote.             |              |
| 1461 |             | Edward the Fourth.                            |              |
|      | 1           | Thomas Beke, *William Perncote.               |              |
|      | 2           | William Rede, William Lynacre.                |              |
|      | 7           | *John Beke, John Wyston.                      |              |
|      | 9           | York, Stephen Dunster, John Hunt.             |              |
|      | 10          | *William Rede, *William Lynacre.              |              |
|      | 12          | John Bront, William Lynacre.                  |              |
|      | 17          | *Thomas Beke, Thomas Besteney.‡               |              |
|      | 21          | Richard More, Thomas Besteney.                |              |
| 1483 |             | Richard the Third.                            |              |
|      | 1           | Richard More, Thomas Besteney.§               |              |
| 1485 |             | Henry the Seventh.                            |              |
|      | 4           | Westminster, Richard Cleche, Thomas Bye.      |              |
|      | 6           | Richard More, John Williams.                  |              |
|      | 12          | John Stanwall, esq. Rd. Smith, generosus.     |              |
|      | 18          | Richard Smith, *Christian Nicholas.           |              |
| 1509 |             | Henry the Eighth.                             |              |
|      | 1           | Richard Cleche, William Justice.              |              |
|      | 2           | *Thomas Carpenter, William Justice.           |              |
|      | 3           | Richard Smith, William Jefford.               |              |
|      | 6           | *John Pownser, Edmund Knightly.               |              |
|      | 14          | Richard Hyde, Richard Edmunds.                |              |
|      | 30          | Thomas Vatchell, John Raymond.                |              |
|      | 32          | Thomas Vatchell, *Richard Justice.            |              |
|      | 36          | Thomas Vatchell, Roger Amyce.                 |              |

<sup>+</sup> Leland says the members for this parliament were, Giles Saintloe, and John Penicock, esqrs. The two following parliaments were several times adjourned to Reading.

<sup>‡</sup> In the diary they are, Thomas Selvyn, Thomas Besteney.

<sup>&</sup>amp; There was only one parliament called in the reign of Richard III. but Mr. Coates mentions two, and places the above as members, in the reign of Edward V. which could not be, as no parliament was called during his short reign, or if called, did not sit.

<sup>||</sup> So styled in the diary, perhaps to distinguish him from those who were tradesmen.

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| Anno. | Rogni- | $oldsymbol{F}$                        | dward the Sixth.                             |
|-------|--------|---------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------|
| 1547  | 1      | at Westminster,                       | William Grey, John Marsh, gent.              |
|       |        | at westminster,                       | John Seyms, John Marsh.                      |
|       | 5      |                                       | *John Bourne, John Winchcomb, esq.           |
|       | 6      |                                       |                                              |
| 1553  |        |                                       | Mary.                                        |
|       | T      |                                       | Thomas Vatchell, *John Bell, esq.            |
|       |        | Oxford,                               | Robert Bowyer, John Lovelace, esq.           |
|       | 2      | Westminster,                          | *John Bourne, Edward Plowden,                |
|       | 3      | •                                     | Thomas Vatchell, esq. *John Bell.            |
|       | 4      |                                       | *Thomas Aldworth, *John Bell.                |
|       | 5      | e i e i e i                           | The same.                                    |
| 1558  |        |                                       | Elizabeth.                                   |
|       | I      | ,                                     | *Thomas Aldworth, Thomas Turner.             |
|       | 5      |                                       | Henry Knollys, esqt. Robert Robotham, esq.   |
|       | 13     | · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · | Henry Knollys, jun. esq. John Hastings, esq. |
|       | 14     |                                       | Robert Knollys, esq. Francis Alford, esq.    |
|       | 27     | * 1                                   | Robert Knollys, esq. * Robert Harris, esq.   |
|       | 28     |                                       | The same.§                                   |
|       | 30     |                                       | The same.                                    |
|       | 31     |                                       | The same.                                    |
|       | 35     |                                       | Humfrey Donnat, Chas. Wednester, gents.      |
|       | 39     | •                                     | Sir Humfrey Foster, knt. Francis More, esq.  |
|       | 43     |                                       | Francis More, esq. Anthony Blagrave, esq.    |
| 1602  |        |                                       | James the First.                             |
|       | 1      |                                       | Sir Jerome Bowes, knt. Francis More, esq.    |

† The first of this ancient family mentioned in history, was Sir Robert Knollys, in the reign of Edward III. "whom martial virtue," says Speed, "had raised from the lowest rank, to the highest reputation, though some affirm him born noble." He was buried in the church of White Friars, London, with the following epitaph engraved on his tomb:

## O Roberte Knollys, per te sit Francia mollis, Ense tuo tollis praedas, dans vulnera collis.

- ‡ Sir Francis Knollys, knight of the garter, and privy consellor to queen Elizabeth; one of this family wrote a general survey of the Isle of Wight, a manuscript copy whereof was in the library of the late earl of Anglesey.—Nicholson's Historical Library, page 14.
- § This seems a mistake, as the diary mentions, for this year, Thomas Vatchell, esq. and John Raymond, esq.
- || Robert Knollys being elected this year to serve in parliament for the county of Brecknock, Thomas Egerton, solicitor-general, was chosen in his room.

| 1620 | Regni.<br>18 | at Westminster, A. Barker, Jo | ohn Saunders, (recorder,) esqrs.  S, jun. knt. John Saunders, esq. |
|------|--------------|-------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 1625 |              | Charles the First             |                                                                    |
|      | ŀ            |                               | , jun. knt. John Saunders, esq.                                    |
|      | 2            | The same.                     |                                                                    |
|      | 3            | The same.                     |                                                                    |
|      | 15           | Edw. Herbert                  | solgeneral, Sir J. Berkley, kt.+                                   |
|      | 15           | Sir Fras. Knol                | llys, sen. Fras. Knollys, jun.‡                                    |
|      | 21           |                               | hell, esq. was chosen in the room                                  |
|      |              | of Sir F. Knol                | llys, jun. deceased. Daniel Bla-                                   |
|      |              | grave, esq. also              | o succeeded Sir F. Knollys, seu.                                   |
|      |              | who either dic                | d, or was expelled in the course                                   |
|      |              | of their long s               | sittings.                                                          |
| 1649 |              | Commonwealth                  |                                                                    |
|      |              | Westminster, Tanfield Vatel   | hell, esq. Daniel Blagrave.§                                       |
| 1653 |              | Protectorate.                 |                                                                    |
|      | ŀ            | A Convention. The Member      | nominated by O. Cromwell.                                          |

† This parliament met on the 13th of April, 1640, and from the short time it sat, was called the short parliament.

† This was the famous long parliament, which met on the 3d of November, 1640, and was not dissolved 'till the 20th of April 1653, when Cromwell assumed the reins of government.

§ "This gentleman," says Wood, "was a counsellor at law, who running with the rout, in the beginning of the rebellion, was chosen a burgess for Reading, to serve as a recruiter in the parliament began at Westminster the 3d of November 1640. About the same time he was made steward (recorder) of Reading, and treasurer of Berks, and had given him the exegenter's office of the common pleas, then esteemed five hundred pounds per annum. Afterwards he was one of the judges of king Charles, and signed the warrant for his execution; bought the king's fee-farm of the manor of Sonning, and other estates, at very easy rates; was master extraordinary in chancery, a constant rumper, and a great persecutor of the ministers in and about Reading, especially when an act of parliament issued out for the ejection of such whom they then called scandalous, ignorant, and insufficient ministers, and school-masters. At length, at the restoration, he fled from justice, and retired to Acon in Germany, where living some years, under a disguised name, he died in an obscure condition, anno 1668, and was buried in the obscure place, near that city, appointed to receive the bodies of those whom they there call heretics."

From his conduct towards the corporation, he appears to have been of a troublesome, litigious disposition, restless, and on all occasions seeking to promote his own interest, though at the expence of justice and honor. From his being styled a constant rumper, and the part he took in the death of the king, he might be supposed to have been a creature of Cromwell's, though his name does not appear in any of the protector's parliaments.

His loyalty would not permit Brown Willis to admit into his list, those who served in parliament for this town, after the king's death; those here mentioned, therefore, are taken from the corporation diary.

| CHAP. | Anno<br>1655 | 2           | Westminster, Col. Robert Hammond.                          |  |  |  |  |
|-------|--------------|-------------|------------------------------------------------------------|--|--|--|--|
| XI.   | . 1000       | 3           | Sir John Barkstead, kt. Lieut. of the Tower.               |  |  |  |  |
| ~     | 1658         | J           | Richard Cromwell.                                          |  |  |  |  |
|       | 1038         | 1           | Thomas Rich, esq. John Blagrave, esq.                      |  |  |  |  |
|       |              | •           |                                                            |  |  |  |  |
|       |              |             | MONARCHY RESTORED.                                         |  |  |  |  |
|       | 1660         |             | Charles the Second.                                        |  |  |  |  |
|       |              | Regni<br>12 | Thos. Rich, esq. John Blagrave, esq.                       |  |  |  |  |
|       |              | 13          | Sir Thos. Doleman, bart. Rd. Aldworth, esq.                |  |  |  |  |
|       |              | 31          | John Blagrave, esq. Nathaniel Knight, esq.                 |  |  |  |  |
|       |              | 32          | Oxford, The same.                                          |  |  |  |  |
|       | 1685         |             | James the Second.                                          |  |  |  |  |
|       | 1000         | 1           | Westminster, John Breedon, esq. Thomas Coates, esq.        |  |  |  |  |
|       |              |             | Interregnum.                                               |  |  |  |  |
|       |              |             | A Convention, John Breedon, esq. Thomas Coates, esq.       |  |  |  |  |
|       | 1400         |             |                                                            |  |  |  |  |
|       | 1688         |             | William and Mary.                                          |  |  |  |  |
|       |              | 1           | Sir W. Rich, bart. Sir H. Fane, kt. of the Bath. The same. |  |  |  |  |
|       |              | 2           |                                                            |  |  |  |  |
|       | 1694         |             | William the Third.                                         |  |  |  |  |
|       |              | 7           | Sir Wm. Rich, bart. Sir Henry Fane, K. B.                  |  |  |  |  |
|       |              | 10          | Sir Owen Buckingham, kt. John Dolby, esq.                  |  |  |  |  |
|       |              | 12          | Sir O. Buckingham, kt. Fras. Knollys, esq.                 |  |  |  |  |
|       |              | 13          | Anth. Blagrave, esq. Tanfield Vatchell, esq.               |  |  |  |  |
|       | 1702         |             | Ann.                                                       |  |  |  |  |
|       |              | 1           | Sir O. Buckingham, kt. Anth. Blagrave, esq.                |  |  |  |  |
|       |              | 4           | Sir O. Buckingham, Tanfield Vatchell, esq.                 |  |  |  |  |
|       |              | 7           | Sir O. Buckingham, Anthony Blagrave, esq.                  |  |  |  |  |
|       |              |             |                                                            |  |  |  |  |

<sup>†</sup> Mr. Coates has inserted the names of two members in this place, but it is certain, from the instrument of government, drawn up by Cromwell and his council of officers, in 1653, that only one member was appointed for Reading, but whether the person chosen was colonel Hammond, or Mr. Holt, is not so certain. This parliament began its sittings the 3d of September, 1653, and was dissolved in January following, so that it is not probable that both could sit in so short a period, and colonel Hammond did not die 'till the following year,

<sup>‡</sup> Mr. Andrew Marvell, member for Hull, in this reign, in a work, called, "The Seasonable Argument to all the Grand Juries," says, "sir Thomas Doleman, bart. had a pension of two hundred pounds per annum, from the court, and was assisted in the cheating will, whereby he got Quarle's estate, valued at sixteen hundred pounds, now clerk of the council, which is worth five hundred pounds per annum, and is promised to be secretary of state, &c."-History of Boroughs.

| Anno. | Regni.    |                 |                                                                      | Снат |
|-------|-----------|-----------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------|------|
| 1711  | 9         | at Westminster, |                                                                      | XI.  |
|       | 12        |                 | Felix Calvert, esq. Robert Clarges, esq. †                           | ~    |
| 1714  | 1.1. 11 1 | G               | eorge the First.                                                     |      |
|       | 1.        |                 | The same: but the election being declared                            |      |
|       |           |                 | null by the house of commons, Chas. Cadogan,                         |      |
|       |           |                 | esq. and Sir O. Buckingham, kt. were elected                         |      |
|       |           |                 | in their stead, but the latter being killed in a                     |      |
|       |           |                 | duel with Mr. Aldworth, in 1720, was suc-                            |      |
|       |           |                 | ceded by Rd. Thompson, esq. In this par-                             |      |
|       |           |                 | liament, the septennial bill was passed by a majority of 264 to 121. |      |
|       | 8         |                 | Anthony Blagrave, esq. Clement Kent, esq.                            |      |
| 1727  |           | Ge.             | orge the Second.                                                     |      |
|       | 1         |                 | Richd. Pottenger, esq. Rd. Thompson, esq.                            |      |
|       | 7         | •               | Rd. Pottenger, esq. Henry Grey, esq.                                 |      |
|       | 12        |                 | J. Blagrave, esq. ‡ vice R. Pottinger deceased.                      |      |
|       | 13        | • •             | On the death of Henry Grey, esq. W. Strode,                          |      |
|       |           |                 | esq. was elected after a very violent contest,                       |      |
|       |           |                 | the majority of the votes being only 285 to                          |      |
|       |           |                 | 275, upon which Mr. Dodd, the unsuccessful                           |      |
|       |           |                 | candidate, petitioned the house against the                          |      |
|       |           |                 | return, and Mr. Strode's election was declared                       |      |
|       |           |                 | void, and Mr. Dodd took his seat for a few                           |      |
|       |           |                 | days, when the house was dissolved.                                  |      |
|       | 14        | •               | Wm. Strode, esq. John Blagrave, esq.                                 |      |
|       | 20        |                 | John Conyers, esq. Rd. Neville Aldworth, esq.                        |      |
|       | 26        |                 | Wm. Strode, esq. Rt. Hon. Lord Fane.                                 |      |
|       | 28        |                 | J. Dodd, esq. vice W. Strode, esq. deceased.                         |      |
| 1760  |           | - Geo           | orge the Third.                                                      |      |
|       | 1         | ,               | Sir Fras. Knollys, bart. John Dodd, esq.                             |      |
|       |           |                 |                                                                      |      |

+ There appears to have been another election in 1713, for, on the 3d of March, sir Owen Buckingham petitioned the house, complaining of an undue election and return; and in April following, he was permitted to withdraw his petition.—Votes of the Commons.

‡ Parties running high in the town at this period, a very strong contest took place, between John Blagrave, esq. and R. Manley, esq. the two candidates; at the close of the poll the numbers were, for Mr. Blagrave 269, and for Mr. Manley 236. The poll was afterwards printed in two columns, the first for Mr. Blagrave's friends in black ink, and the other for Mr. Manley's in red; but why the distinction was made, is not known.

| CHAP. 1768 | Regni<br>S | at Westminster, | John Dodd, esq. Henry Vansittart, esq.4       |
|------------|------------|-----------------|-----------------------------------------------|
| XI.        | 14         |                 | John Dodd, esq. Francis Annesley, esq.        |
|            | 20         |                 | The same.                                     |
|            | 22         |                 | Rd. Aldworth Neville, esq. vice J. Dodd decd. |
|            | 24         | · ·             | Fras. Annesley, esq. R. A. Neville, esq.      |
|            | 30         |                 | The same.                                     |
|            | 36         |                 | The same.                                     |
|            | .37        |                 | John Simeon, esq. vice Rd. A. Neville, esq.   |
|            |            |                 | called to the House of Lords.                 |
|            | 42         | the second      | F. Annesley, esq. Charles Shaw Lefevre, esq.  |
|            | 47         |                 | Chas. Shaw Lefevre, esq. John Simeon, esq. 1  |
|            | 48         |                 | John Simeon, esq. C. S. Lefevre, esq.         |
|            | 53         | ,               | C.S. Lefevre, esq. John Simeon, esq.          |

After the decission of the house of commons, which limited the right of voting to housekeepers, paying scot and lot, it became customary after the elections, to print poll papers containing the names of the voters, and the numbers polled for each candidate. From these papers we have extracted the following summary of the number of voters at each contested election since that period:

† Mr. Vansittart having been lost in his passage to India, Mr. Coates says, Mr. Annesley succeeded him in 1772, but this is a mistake, a motion for a new writ was made in the house of commons, but negatived; and in consequence no election took place 'till the succeeding general election.

‡ At this election, Mr. Annesley having declined offering his future services, from an ill state of health, the mayor, aldermen, burgesses, and inhabitants, as a memorial of the high sense they entertained of his long and faithful services, presented him with an elegant piece of plate, with the following inscription:

#### Presented to

Francis Annesley, esq. L. L. D.

Master of Downing College, in the University of
Cambridge, and one of the hereditary
Trustees of the British Museum.
Who in six successive parliaments
Represented the borough of Reading,
With honor to himself, and fidelity to his constituents.
This MEMORIAL

Of their private esteem, and public gratitude,
Was unanimously voted at a general meeting
Of the electors for that purpose,
The 10th day of December, 1807.

T. GLEED, esq. chairman.

| R | E | PR | ES | FN | IT A | TI | ON. |
|---|---|----|----|----|------|----|-----|
|   |   |    |    |    |      |    |     |

241 CHAP. XI.

|               |                                         |               |                  | λ1. |
|---------------|-----------------------------------------|---------------|------------------|-----|
| Anno.<br>1721 | Names of Candidates, Anthony Blagrave - | Votes.<br>289 | No. of Electors. | ~   |
|               | Clement Kent,                           | 282           |                  |     |
|               | Richard Thompson -                      | 209           |                  |     |
|               | C. Cadogan, -                           | 234           | •                |     |
|               | ,                                       |               |                  |     |
| 1727          | Richard Pottenger, esq.                 |               |                  |     |
|               | Richard Thompson, esq.                  |               |                  |     |
|               |                                         |               |                  |     |
| 1734          | Richard Pottenger, esq.                 |               |                  |     |
|               | Henry Grey, esq.                        |               |                  |     |
|               |                                         |               |                  |     |
| 1739          | John Blagrave, esq                      | 269           |                  |     |
|               | Richard Manley, esq                     | 236           |                  |     |
|               |                                         |               |                  |     |
| 1740          | William Strode, esq                     | 285           |                  |     |
|               | John Dodd, esq                          | 275           |                  |     |
|               |                                         |               |                  |     |
| 1754          | William Strode, esq                     | 324           |                  |     |
|               | Right Honorable Lord Vane,              | 296           |                  |     |
|               | John Dodd, esq                          | 295†          |                  |     |
|               |                                         |               |                  |     |
| 1755          | John Dodd, esq.                         |               |                  |     |
| 1760          | John Dodd, esq                          | 396           |                  |     |
|               | Sir Francis Knollys, -                  | 316           |                  |     |
|               | Charles de Salis,                       | 254           |                  |     |
|               |                                         |               |                  |     |
| 1768          | Henry Vansittart, esq                   | 401           | 568              |     |
|               | John Dodd, esq.                         | 396           |                  |     |
|               | John Bingley, esq                       | 193           |                  |     |
|               |                                         |               |                  |     |
| 1774          | John Dodd, esq                          | 302           | 537              |     |
|               | Francis Annesley, esq                   | 330           |                  |     |
|               | J. Walter, esq.                         | 250           |                  |     |
|               | 4                                       |               |                  |     |

<sup>†</sup> This was the strongest contested election that had occurred for many years; corruption was got to such a height, that towards the close of the poll, from thirty to forty guineas were given for votes. When the poll was declared, Mr. Dodd fainted away on the hustings.

## REPRESENTATION.

| CHAP. | Anno.                                    | Names of Candidat                                                                         | es.          |        | Votes. | No. of Electors. |
|-------|------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------|--------|--------|------------------|
| XI.   | 1780                                     | Francis Annesle                                                                           | ey, esq      | -      | 345    | 523              |
| ~     |                                          | John Dodd, esq                                                                            |              | -      | 318    |                  |
|       |                                          | Hon. Temple Li                                                                            | attrell, -   | -      | 199    |                  |
|       |                                          | •                                                                                         |              |        |        |                  |
|       | 1782                                     | Richard Aldwor                                                                            | th Navilla   | 000    | 267    | 517              |
|       | 110%                                     |                                                                                           |              | , esq. | 179    | . 311            |
|       |                                          | John Simeon, es                                                                           | 4.           | -      | 179    |                  |
|       | 7004                                     | TAT 1 .*                                                                                  |              |        |        |                  |
|       | 1784                                     | No election.                                                                              |              |        |        |                  |
|       |                                          |                                                                                           |              |        |        |                  |
|       | 1790                                     | Francis Annesle                                                                           | -            | •      | 394    | 562              |
|       |                                          | Richard Aldwor                                                                            | th Neville,  | esq.   | 316    |                  |
|       |                                          | Rt. Hon. Earl o                                                                           | of Barrymo   | re,    | 255    |                  |
|       |                                          |                                                                                           |              |        |        |                  |
|       | 1796                                     | No election.                                                                              |              |        |        |                  |
|       |                                          |                                                                                           |              |        |        |                  |
|       | 1797                                     | No election.                                                                              |              |        |        |                  |
|       |                                          |                                                                                           |              |        |        |                  |
|       | 1802                                     | Francis Annesle                                                                           | v, esq.      | _      | 385    | 643              |
|       |                                          | Charles Shaw L                                                                            | _            | _      | 349    |                  |
|       |                                          | John Simeon, es                                                                           |              |        | 231    |                  |
|       |                                          | Com Simony C.                                                                             | · <b>q</b> • |        | 1003   |                  |
|       |                                          |                                                                                           |              |        |        |                  |
|       | 1807                                     | No election.                                                                              |              |        |        |                  |
|       | 1501                                     | 140 election.                                                                             |              |        |        |                  |
|       | 1812.                                    | A 4 41.1141 4                                                                             | 1            |        | 7'1 /  |                  |
|       | 1012.                                    | At this election there were three candidates,<br>and the poll was kept open two days, for |              |        |        |                  |
|       |                                          |                                                                                           |              |        |        |                  |
|       | the first time within the memory of man. |                                                                                           |              |        |        |                  |
|       | The numbers were—                        |                                                                                           |              |        |        |                  |
|       | First day. Second day. Total.            |                                                                                           |              |        |        |                  |
|       | For Mr. Lefevre, 183 256 =               |                                                                                           | =            | 439    | 738    |                  |
|       |                                          | Simeon, 198                                                                               | 193          | =      | 391    |                  |
|       | Mr.                                      | Monck, 110                                                                                | 176          | =      | 286    |                  |
|       |                                          |                                                                                           |              |        |        |                  |

# Religious Foundations.

## CHAPTER XII.

## THE MONASTERY.

THE first religious establishment at Reading, is said, by some ancient historians, to have been a monastery, for nuns, founded by Elfrida, the mother-in-law of Edward the martyr, whom she caused to be stabbed by a ruffian, as he was drinking a cup of wine to her health, at the gate of Corfe castle in Dorsetshire.

CHAP.

In the early ages of christianity, when the power of remitting or retaining the sins of the laity, was supposed to be vested in the hands of the clergy, the price of the atonement was estimated, not according to the greater or less degree of guilt incurred by the offender, but to his rank in life; so that while the inferior orders of society might be absolved for a trifling pecuniary fine, the royal or noble sinner, could not be reconciled to offended heaven, without the endowment of some religious establishment, that might increase the power and influence of the church. Accordingly, we find, that most of our religious establishments originated either from some real or pretended crimes, committed by their founders. Thus Elfrida, stung with remorse for the crime she had committed, which was further aggravated by the report of the miracles said to have been performed at the tomb of the deceased monarch, endeavored, we are told, to deprecate the wrath of offended heaven, by building and endowing several monasteries in different parts of the kingdom, among which was this for nuns.\*

There is some doubt as to where this monastery was situated. Leland says, "for more certente, I knowe not whither the olde nunnerie stood not yn the place wher th' abbaye of Reddinge stondeth, and whither St. Maries be not of a newer foundation." What reasons Leland could have for the supposition, that it was originally built on the site of the abbey, I know not; but it certainly appears more probable that it really was where St. Mary's church now stands.

<sup>\*</sup> Asserius says it was a monastery for monks, but in this assertion he was certainly mistaken.

CHAP.

Places of this description were called by our Saxon ancestors, mynstrers,\* the same as that of the street leading from St. Mary's church yard is now called, from whence it may be inferred, it originally took its name; which would not have been the case had the mynstrer been situated at so great a distance from it as the Forbury is. Besides, we may observe, as another corroberating circumstance of this opinion, that afterwards, in the reign of William I. when the possessions belonging to this monastery had been bestowed by that monarch on his newly erected abbey at Battle in Sussex, that quarter of the town, adjoining the monastery, and which was a material part, if not the whole of its possessions, was called the manor of Battle or Battle.

This number was founded in 979; but for what number of nums we have not been able to learn.†

In 1006, only twenty-seven years after its erection, it was destroyed by the Danes, and the nuns most probably put to death, the usual practice with these marauders, and it does not appear to have been afterwards rebuilt; indeed the number of ruined houses here mentioned in Doomsday, is a convincing proof that the town itself had not recovered, even so long after, from the ruinous state it had been reduced to by the Danes.

This monastery is expressly mentioned in the charter of the abbey founded by Henry I. in 1121, or, according to Matthew Paris, in 1120; so that there can be no doubt of its pre-existence, or that it was destroyed, as we have said, by the Danes; but whether, as is therein asserted, for its sins, is not so clear; it being common, in those days of ignorance, to impute the natural consequences of war, or accident, to the interference of providence. However this may be, it is certain he endowed his new-erected abbey with the revenues belonging to the monastery, and it is very probable, that its ruins were applied to the building of the abbey, as, even at this time, traces of a former

<sup>\*</sup> Mr. Hearne, in his preface to his collection of discourses, speaking of this town, says, "I am not ignorant that this mynster of Assendune, is commonly reported to have been nothing more than a church, but for my own part I am willing to think it was something beside, viz. that there was a religious house there. The Saxon annals also call it by no other name than mynster, which I think will confirm my notion, the meaning thereof being a monastery, and not a church only."

<sup>†</sup> It is very probable that another convent for nuns was subsequently established here, for besides Leveva the abbess, mentioned in Doomsday book, as presiding in the reign of Edward the Confessor, several years after the destruction of this by the Danes, in Tanner's Notitia, is the following clause, 7th John, m. 11. "Rex vicecomiti Berchesyre. Præcepimus quod sine dilatione reddi facias priorissæ et monialibus de Radynge duodecim solidatas reditus in Wallingford unde desseisitæ fuerunt." Perhaps these were the poor sisters established here in the hospital called St. John's house; but if so I do not see how they could be styled moniales.

building are discoverable within the walls, particularly pieces of wrought freestone of different dimensions, in some of which the grooves wherein the lead was run to fasten them together are still visible; these are imbedded among the rubbish that forms the interior of the walls, and shew that they must have been originally intended for a better purpose.

CHAP.

## THE ABBEY.

Different motives have been assigned for this act of Henry's munificence. Dugdale, in the Monasticon, says, "that he founded the abbey in consequence of a pennance (indicta sibi pænitentia) imposed on him by the church; while others assert, that Henry, struck with remorse, for having caused his brother's eyes to be put out, and confined him in Cardiff castle during the remainder of his days, founded this abbey as an atonement for his crime. But Henry had too much good sense, to suppose that by this means he could make a propitiation, not for a crime already committed, but for one he was still in the act of perpetrating, as Robert continued in prison till his death in 1134, which was thirteen years after the foundation of the abbey. From this consideration, I am inclined to think that Henry was rather influenced by political than religious motives, in adding this munificent establishment to the possessions of the church. Henry knew, that his title to the crown, which he had usurped, in consequence of his brother Robert's absence from the kingdom, depended wholly on the support of the people, and that if they should, at any future time, become disaffected, the clergy alone, by the influence they possessed over the minds of the ignorant multitude, could prevent them, at any time, from rising in the defence of a prince, whose right to the crown could ot be justly disputed. Under this impression, he took every opportunity of binding them to his interest by gifts and emoluments, and there can be little doubt, but the foundation of Reading abbey was one of the means adopted for this purpose. But from whatever motive this once noble structure originated, it must be acknowledged to have been worthy of its royal founder, as, notwithstanding the ruinous state in which it now appears, it bears evident marks of its original magnificence.

The walls of this building were about six feet thick, coated on the outside with free stone, and filled within with flints and rubbish of various kinds, bedded in mortar, which has so hardened by time, as to resist all the attempts that have hitherto been made to destroy them, and have thus preserved these noble ruins, which have escaped the ravages of former times, from having been converted to other uses.

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After the dissolution, such of the materials as could be removed, were sold by the king's commissioners, for different purposes; a great part was used in the construction of St. Mary's and St. Lawrence's churches; and a quantity was conveyed to Windsor, sufficient, we are told, to build the hospital for the poor knights, containing thirteen rooms, besides a kitchen, and a pastry. And, of late years, several massive pieces of the wall, which could not easily have been reduced, have been used by the late general Conway, in the construction of that stupendous bridge, which he has caused to be erected over a part of the high road leading from Wargrave to Henley, and which, from its singular construction, and the enormous masses of stones brought from distant parts of the island, and hanging together apparently without any support or regularity, must fill the spectator with admiration and astonishment.

But what principally contributed to reduce it to its present state, was the damage it sustained, from the various attacks made upon it during the civil war, while in the possession of either of the contending parties; many of the outer walls were at that period destroyed by the artillery; and, at the evacuation of it by the king's troops, in 1644, some of the most considerable were either undermined or blown up.

The flints used in the construction of the building, appear to have been brought from the chalk hill, near Caversham church, evident traces remaining of its having been formerly disturbed for such a purpose, the upper stratum of mould being now buried several feet below the surface of the hill, covered with loose chalk, from which the flints have been carefully extracted.

It is observable, that both the kinds of stone employed in erecting the abbey, have been apparently formedby the concretion of either marine or vegetable substances. The former of these was employed in the exterior, and ornamental parts of the structure, and appears, on inspection, to be a kind of testaceous free-stone, the same as is found in the quarries of Purbeck, and of Petworth, in Sussex, from whence it was probably brought; where the stone has been abraded by the weather, many minute shells appear on the surface, which from the nature of their contexture, have made a stronger resistance to the corroding power of the air, than the sandy parts with which they are combined, the shells being prominent, and still retaining their original form and color. This is most observable on the pillars that support the arch of the Forbury gateway, for these being exposed to a northern aspect, have suffered more from the weather, than those in more favorable situations.

The other kind of stone, which was used only in the construction of the arched ceilings, which separated the different stories instead of timber floors, is of a more porous nature, very light, and pervious to water, being composed of

filaments of vegetable growth, combined with a chalky substance. There being no quarries in the neighborhood from whence this stone could have been taken, it has been supposed by some to have been brought from Normandy, but a writer in the Gentleman's Magazine\* asserts, that the same kind of stone is found in the quarries at Wantage; if so, we can be no longer at a loss for the place of its production.

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The remains of the abbey are in such a state of dilapidation, that it is impossible to form a correct judgment of the ornamental parts in its original state; but from the fragments of broken shafts dispersed among the walls and buildings, in various parts of the town, it is conjectured they were chiefly what are called clustered columns, there being few found of a greater diameter than six inches, which must have been too slight to have singly supported the roof of such a building; if there were any larger, it is probable they were employed in building the churches before-mentioned. The only capital remaining, is thirteen inches diameter at the base, or under side, and sixteen in the upper. It is divided into four compartments, in each of which is embossed a large scallop shell, in bold relief, the same as in the abbey arms A representation of this capital is given in plate 12, fig. 1, in which will be seen several other ornaments taken from stone fragments embodied in the walls and building which surround the abbey, and are no doubt part of its remains. In the same plate will be found an engraving of a massive chimney piece, found bricked up within the walls of a large stack of chimnies, lately taken down at a house in Broad-street, which, from its size and ornaments, I am inclined to think originally belonged to the abbey.

The site of the abbey is equal, if not superior, to any spot in the county of Berks, for richness of soil, and pleasantness of situation. Placed on the ridge of a hill, running east and west, and forming the north-east extremity of the town, it commands a beautiful view of the adjoining country. On the north, the hill descends by a gentle declivity, to a range of meadows, covered with the choicest herbage, and watered by the majestic river Thames, beyond whose boundary the Oxfordshire hills, fringed with trees, and variegated with all the luxuriance of cultivated nature, formed a back ground to the prospect, sufficiently near to afford a distinct view of the surrounding scenery. Towards the east, the view is more extensive, comprehending the beautiful vale between this town and the village of Sonning, through which the river Thames is seen gently gliding along, 'till it is intercepted at the latter place, by the near approach of the Berkshire and Oxfordshire hills, where turning to the left, it again appears to view, passing by the beautiful villages of Wargraye

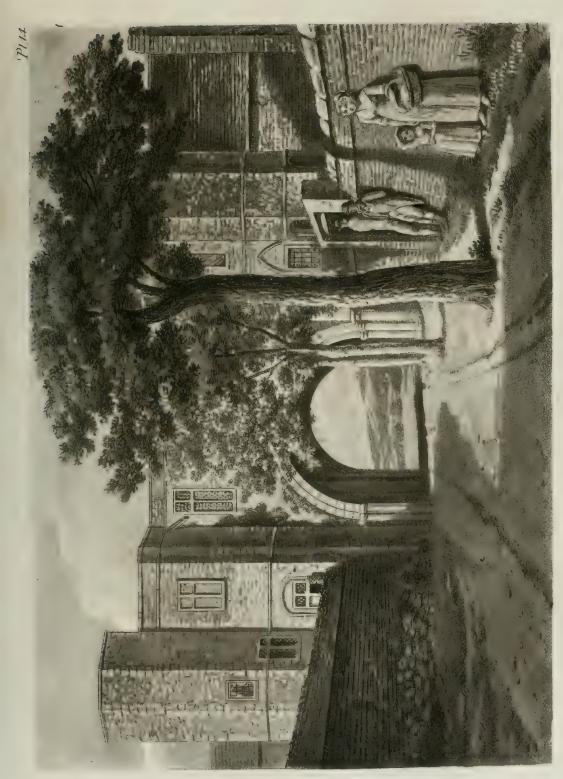
and Shiplack; soon after which it disappears among the hills that surround the XII. pleasant town of Henley. On the west, the prospect, although it has since been intercepted by buildings, was nearly similar to that on the east; on the south, it was not so extensive, but more picturesque, the river Kennet gently gliding along its banks. On the opposite side the river was the park,\* including all the ground between it and the high road, from the Back-lane, now East-street, to the thirty-eighth mile stone; this space was called the Ortes. Beyond this the ground rises gradually, affording a delightful view of a finely wooded country, bounded by the distant hills of Hampshire,

Such was the spot which Henry chose for the erection of this once celebrated abbey, now reduced to a mass of ruins, and involved in so much confusion, by the broken fragments which have fallen in almost all directions, as almost to preclude the possibility of tracing an outline of the original building, or the boundaries of its enclosure. Sir Henry Englefield has favored the public with the best, if not the only ground plan hitherto published of the different buildings that formerly composed this extensive establishment. With the aid therefore of this, and our own observations on the spot, we shall endeavor to enable our readers to form, if not a correct, at least as accurate an idea as possible of its original state.

Though the abbey was not perhaps originally intended for a place of strength, yet, as the safety of its secluded inhabitants might hereafter be endangered, whenever the nation should be disturbed by civil commotions, the royal founder, in addition to the massive walls of the buildings, endeavored to render it more secure from violence, by surrounding it on three of its sides with thick and lofty walls, while on the other it was protected by the river, which formed a natural barrier on that side, and was subsequently strengthened by the castle, which was erected, if I rightly conjecture, on its banks.

The surrounding wall commenced on the northern bank of the Holy brook, adjoining the Saracen's-head inn yard, from whence it was carried, in a straight line, along the back of the Market-place, as far as the Compter; here its original traces are broken off by the subsequent erection of St. Lawrence's church, and the inclosing of the church-yard in the reign of Philip and Mary, but supposing it to have been continued in a straight line, it would have crossed the church-yard to the ancient buildings now partly occupied

<sup>\*</sup> Leland says, "in enteryng the town from Sunning, there is a parke longyng to the late monasterie there." The park here mentioned, has been supposed by some to have been that at Whitley, belonging also to the abbots, but this could not be, as Leland expressly says it was at the entrance of the town from Sonning, whereas Whitley lies more to the south.



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by Mr. Street, from whence it seems to have turned in a right angle westward, as far as doctor Valpy's,\* and from thence again northward, as far as the present corner of the Forbury, and parallel with the Vasterns. On the north side, the wall was carried along the present line to its extremity beyond the county-prison, where it took a southern direction to the river Kennet.

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This wall appears to have been originally surrounded by a piece of enclosed ground, about fifty yards wide, like the pomærium that surrounded the Roman cities, and was not allowed either to be cultivated, or built upon, for fear of endangering the safety of the place. This boundary is particularly observable on the west side; the line of the buildings next the Market-place and Vastern-lane, being in both places that distance from the original wall. Beside this outer wall, the abbey, as may be seen in Speed's map, was surrounded by another, dividing the Forbury into what were called the outer and inner courts.

The whole of the ground contained within the outward boundary, consisted of about thirty acres of dry gravelly soil, exceedingly well adapted to insure the health and security of the persons intended to reside within its circuit. The entrances to it were defended by four arched gateways, with battlements on their tops similar to those on the walls. The first was on the bank of the Holy-brook, where the wall commenced, on the south west corner of the enclosure; some of the ruins of which, are still visible on this spot; another was situated to the eastward of the Compter, entering into the Forbury, where, crossing the road, it abutted against the chancel of St. Lawrence's church, as appears both from Speed's map, and the auditor's accounts, mentioned in the church register for 1593.† This, therefore, could not have been that which has lately been taken down, its situation having been more to the westward, and consequently out of the line of the original wall, and neither corresponding, either in strength or beauty, with the building to which it must have formed the principal entry. A third gateway was in the north wall, leading into the meadows, at a place now called the Hole in the Wall, which name it probably received from the opening caused by the destruction of the gateway, during the siege in the seventeenth century. The fourth was at the entrance from the Forbury on the north side of Blake's-bridge.

Beside these four gates in the outer court, there was another, still existing, which led to the inner court. This building is composed of an intermixture of bricks, chalk, and stone; ever the arch-way is a flat timber floor,

<sup>\*</sup> I think it not unlikely, that instead of turning westward here, it might have continue in a straight line to the Hole in the Wall, excluding that part where the cheese fair is now kept.

<sup>+</sup> See St. Lawrence's parish.

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supporting the chambers above, surmounted by a modern parapet wall, instead of the battlements which existed in its original state. At each corner of the building is an octangular tower, and near the spring of the arch on each side, is a square buttress, which very much diminishes the otherwise elegant appearance of the structure.

The front facing the north is composed of a beautiful Saxon arch with an obtuse point at the top, rising from three stone clustered pillars without capitals, and rounded to the summit of the arch.\*

The south front varies from the north, by the arch being quite circular instead of pointed at the top. At the entrance, on the right hand side, near the spring of the arch, is the mutilated figure of either a dog or a fox, and, on the left is a dolphin, with the red rose, the badge of the house of Lancaster, in the finny part of the tail; these served for spouts to carry off the rain water, which they discharged at their mouths.—Plate 12, fig. 3 & 4.

The space under the building, between the two outer arches is twenty feet square, divided into two unequal departments by a third circular arch extending to the ceiling, in which a massive gate was suspended by large hooks, that are still remaining, though the gate has been removed. This judicious position of the gate in the interior of the building, was well calculated to afford a place of shelter for those who came there on business, either from the outer or inner court. In the larger division were two doors, one on each side, forming a communication with the porter's lodges, but these are now more than half buried with rubbish, which has from time to time accumulated in the passage, from the careless manner the road has been mended; but this might be removed at a trifling expense, and these elegant arches be again restored to their original beauty.

From the position of the gate, and other circumstances, I am inclined to think, that this is what was called the portsmouth, in the decree concerning the election of mayor in the reign of Henry VIIth, where the three good and able burgesses were to be presented to the abbot, for the choice of one to be mayor, and where the fine was to be paid eight days prior to their being presented within the abbey.†

From the general style of this building, it is evident it could not have formed any part of the original foundation, though the precise time of its

<sup>\*</sup> In the beginning of the reign of Henry VIII. or rather towards the end of that of Henry VII, when brick buildings became common, a new kind of low pointed arch grew much in use; it was described from four centres, very round at the haunches, and the angle at the top was very obtuse. This sort of arch is to be found in every one of cardinal Woolsey's buildings at West Sheen; an ancient gate-way at Mile-end, called king John's gate; and in the great gate of the palace at Lambeth.—Grose's Antiquities.

† See the account of the corporation.

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erection cannot be positively ascertained. But, if I might be allowed the conjecture, I should place it about the reign of Henry VIIth or VIIIth, when this style of building began to take place; and the above mentioned rose in the dolphin's tail, may allude to the union of the two roses in the person of Henry VIIth; as the dog on the other side the gateway, may to the dogs which surround the cypher of Hugh Farringdon, given in Tomkins's Views. Should these conjectures be correct, they will fix the era of this gateway between 1520 and 1540. Within this gateway was the inner court, through which was the way to the principal entrance to the abbey; but owing to the ground having been since built upon, and the confusion occasioned by throwing up the ramparts in this part, during the civil wars, this cannot now be discovered; the only entrance on this side, at present, being through an arched passage, which could have received no light, except from the extremities, and therefore is not likely to have been the principal entrance to this superb abbey. This passage\* (a) which is 46 feet long and 15 wide, opens into the south-east corner of the cloisters, and was probably only intended as a private way for the monks.

The part called the cloisters, was an open area about one hundred and forty-five feet square, surrounded by a covered way or piazza, communicating with the main building and church. On the right hand of the passage is a door-way leading to the apartments, and within it is a circular stair case, (b) leading to the upper part of the building. This wing probably consisted of the offices, as there appear to have been arched cellars under the whole range, and at the south end was the kitchen, as is supposed from the spot being called Kitchen-end.

On the right hand, on entering the cloister, is the great hall or consistory. This beautiful room was eighty feet long to the extremity of the bow, and forty feet wide, with three large entrance doors from the cloister, with three windows over them, and five large windows at the east end; on each of the side walls were four pilasters, 20 feet high, from which the arched ceiling sprung. This room, from the floor to the centre of the ceiling, was forty feet in height, and arched over with the porous stone above mentioned. On digging lately within the walls at c, and d, the foundation of the outer walls of this room, (and probably of the rest of the building) was found to be seven feet deep and twelve feet thick to the set off; above which the walls were six feet thick, as in other parts of the building. This noble room, where general and provincial councils were frequently assembled, and where parlia-

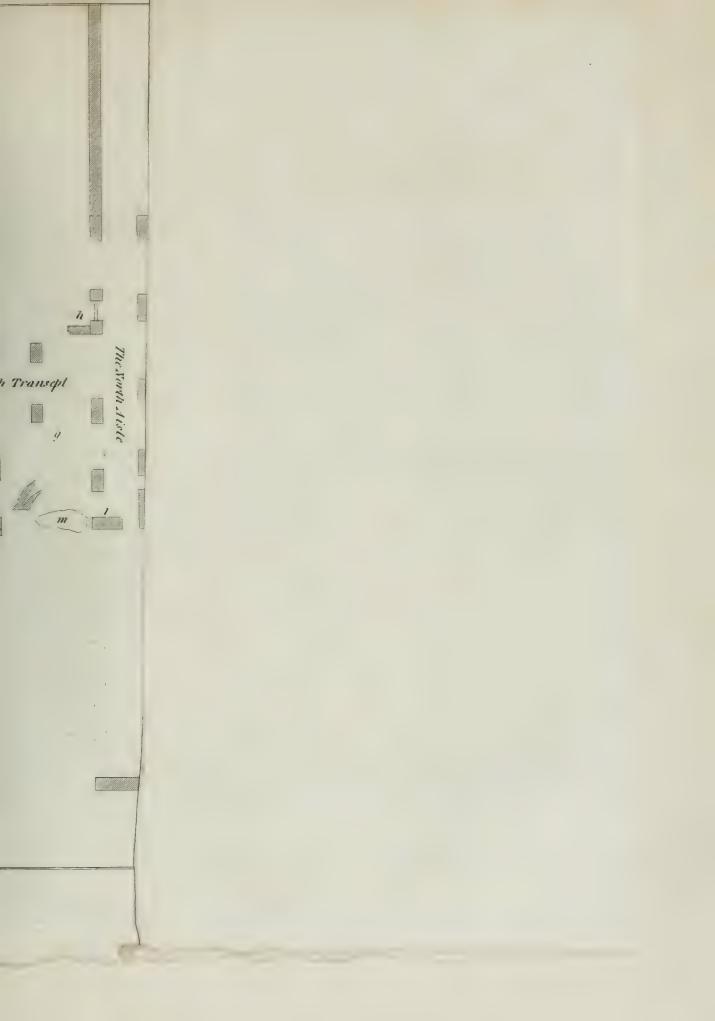
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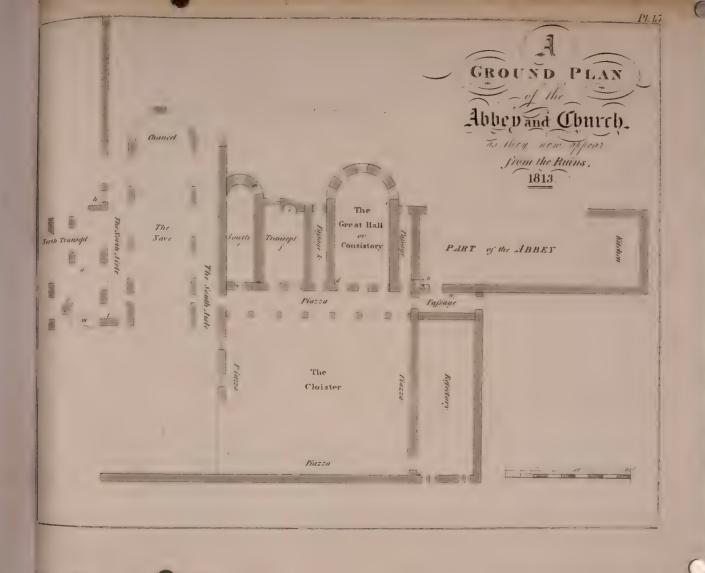
ments sometimes met, is now disfigured by the erection of a national school within its walls, whereby the spectator is in a great measure deprived of the pleasure he must otherwise have been struck with, at sight of its massive walls, no longer visible but from the outer side.

On each side of the consistory is a passage with an entrance from the cloister. These passages were fifty feet long, twelve feet wide, and sixteen feet high, with vaulted ceiling of stone, and over them were rooms of the same dimensions, and vaulted in the same manner. These arched ceilings account for the excessive thickness of the outer walls, as nothing less could have resisted the enormous weight of the arches, however light the stone of which they were composed.

Adjoining the passage, on the north side, are the ruins represented in the plan, (e. f.) which sir Henry Englefield makes a part of the church, called the south transept; and some others on the north side the church (g.) but which are in a much more imperfect state, he denominates the north transept; how far he may be right in this conjecture, I am unable to say, but certain it is, these two parts do not assimilate, as might be supposed, for the high wall with a window in it, at h, and against which the present cottage was built by lord Fane, shews that this part was much less in length than the opposite side, and was certainly without the bow at the east end, which the other has. At the south-east corner of the south transept, is a circular recess, (i.) formed within the substance of the wall, for what purpose cannot, perhaps, now be ascertained, unless it was intended for a circular staircase, such as are common in ancient bildings, and nearly similar to that at b. Should this have been its original intent, this part of the building may rather be supposed to have belonged to the abbey than the church, and indeed, unless this was the case, we do not see how a communication could have been made with the room over the vaulted passage (k). We have already remarked that the north transept does not correspond with the south one, as might have been expected, had the building been uniform; and as there is a corresponding passage on the south side the consistory to that on the north, it seems not unlikely that a building, similar to the south transept, might have been on that side also, which would render the whole uniform.

The church was erected on the north side of the abbey, and in a line with the cloister, but whether it extended so far westward as this does, is now rendered uncertain, by the fortifications thrown up in the reign of Charles I. having occasioned the removal of every vestige of a building, beyond the part described in the plan. Nevertheless, as there still remain three openings for windows in the part of the wall yet standing on the north side the cloister, they afford a





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strong conjecture that they were intended to give light to the west end of the church, it being unlikely that any other building should be erected on this spot. Taking therefore for granted, that the church did originally extend as far as the present wall, in a line with the west end of the cloister, the whole length will be about 260 feet. But the fragment of the wall at l. lying in a different direction from the others, as if it made a part of the end wall at that place, seems, at first sight, to militate against this conclusion, though in fact it rather confirms it. In the miniature representation of the abbey in Speed's map, the spire rises from the centre of the building, which, if the length be extended as here supposed, will be found to be exactly in this part, and therefore the wall lying in this direction, was probably intended the better to support the weight; we may also add, that the cavity in the ground, (m.) supposed to have been a mine sprung for the destruction of the building, is close under it, and the masses of wall pitched in a slanting position, which were most probably part of the steeple, are but a small distance from it.

The nave was forty feet wide, and separated from the side aisles by alternate walls and arches, ranging the whole length. These, from the present state of the ruins, appear as one continued wall, but on closer inspection, it will be found to have many breaks, and the fragments of the walls in the two ranges, to be opposite each other. From the general style of the building, confirmed by the two circular arched windows, still remaining at the west end of the dormitory, we may suppose ail the principal windows had circular heads, though from their present appearance, the natural consequence of their ruinous state, some of them appear to have been pointed, but pointed windows were not introduced 'till some years after the building of this abbey.

The abbey church was not completed 'till 1164, in the reign of Henry II. at which time it was consecrated by archbishop Beckett, to the honor of the Virgin Mary, and St. John the Evangelist.

The foundation of a wall is still visible, connected with the chancel of the church, and running in a straight line under the county bridewell wall; but whether this was, as sir H. Englefield supposes, the eastern chapel, or rather the boundary wall of the church-yard, I am not certain, but am rather inclined to think the latter, because there are no appearances of a corresponding wall on the opposite side; and if this had been the chapel, it must have obstructed the light from the chancel windows; but above all, because it was in this spot that the remains of human skeletons were discovered, on digging the foundation for the county bridewell, shewing it to have been the common burial ground. Besides the principal building, there were others detached from it, as the kitchen, at a place still called Kitchen's-end, the infirmary, and the mill,

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The ground on the right hand, after entering the inner court from the Forbury, now partly occupied by Messrs. Bulley and Deane, is supposed to have been the garden belonging to the abbey, containing about an acre and a half of land, pleasantly situated on a gentle declivity towards the south, and sheltered from the north winds, by the wall that divided the inner and outer courts.

It is doubtful whether there was any well belonging to the abbey, at its first erection; one has since been discovered in the cloisters, which is now filled up with rubbish, but it is probable this was of a later date, as it is not, we believe, usual to find wells in such situations; perhaps this was dug for the use of the garrison in the civil war, in the reign of Charles I. as they could not be supplied with spring water by any other means. Before the reformation, this religious house was supplied from the Conduit, near the turnpike, at the south end of Sivier-street. The name given to this spring shews it to have been derived from the Normans, who were the founders of the abbev. As some laborers were excavating a saw-pit, about the middle of the last century, at the eastern extremity of Mr. Blandy's wharf, on the south side of the river, they discovered a leaden pipe, about two inches in diameter, lying in the direction of the Conduit, and passing under the river towards the abbey, part of which, from its situation under the water, they were obliged to leave; the remainder was sold for old lead.

It was from this source, therefore, the abbey was supplied with spring water; and as everything belonging to these religious foundations was supposed to be holy, and to be attended with some miraculous powers, so this spring was supposed to be beneficial in the cure of sore eyes.

The mill is a substantial flint and stone building of great antiquity, though the exact era of its erection cannot now be ascertained. It is worked by the water of the Holy-brook, which branches out of the river Kennet, at a place called Langley-mead, near Theale,\* from whence it flows in a serpentine course to Coley, from which place it pursues a straight line eastward till it approaches within a few yards of the river, at a place called the Old Orchard, from whence it suddenly turns to the northward, and preserving the

<sup>\*</sup> Leland, who is followed by Mr. Coates, says, "it brekith out of the principal stream of the Kennet, above the town by W. S. W. about the Bere, where the abbot of Reading had a fair manor place of bricke," But this is evidently a mistake, as Bere Court, the abbot's residence, is at the distance of at least three miles from the principal stream, or the Kennet,

passing which, it unites again with the river from whence it originated. From the Holy-brook running in a perfectly straight line from Coley, there can be no doubt but this part of it was originally formed into a canal at the expense of the abbot and monks, for the express purpose of supplying not only the mill, but even the abbey, with soft water, thus securing the two most necessary

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articles of subsistence to the inhabitants of this once noble monastery; where "Triumphant plenty, with a cheerful grace,

" Bask'd in each eye, and sparkel'd in each face."

The brook, in its passage through the town, was paved at the bottom with bricks, and the greater part of it arched over, and its fall from Coley to the mill has been so gradually preserved, that the latter is able to work, even in the highest floods, without being prevented by the back water, owing to the mill being situated so much above the level of the river, into which the water of the brook falls after passing it.

From the above imperfect sketch of the abbey, and its precincts, some idea may be formed of the strength and extent of this once stupendous structure, whose ruins, though still venerable from time, are fast mouldering away, and will, probably, in a few years, entirely disappear.

Henry began the foundation of the abbey at the commencement of the year 1121, and, as the charter he afterwards granted them was not signed till 1125, the intermediate space of four years was probably spent in completing the building, which was afterwards dedicated to the honor of the Virgin Mary and St. John, and endowed, by Henry, with an ample maintenance for an abbot, a prior, and sub-prior, and two hundred monks of the Benedictine order, but this number was not always complete, for, at the inquisition taken in the reign of Edward III. there were only one hundred in all.<sup>2</sup>

In the following charter which Henry granted to the abbot and monks, he invested them with almost regal authority, and with such extensive possessions, in different parts of the kingdom, as evince the interest he took in the advancement of this his favorite endowment.

## A Copy of the foundation Charter of Henry I.2

"Henricus, Dei gratià, &c. Henry, by the grace of God, king of the English, and duke of the Normans, to all his archbishops, bishops, abbots, earls, barons, and to all christians, as well present as future, health.

" Landw ye that three abbeys, in the kingdom of England, were, for their

<sup>1</sup> Grose's Antiquities.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup> Dugdale's Monasticon.

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"No person, either great or small, may demand any thing, by custom or violence, as due from the men, lands, or possessions, of the said monastery, nor the levying of men, on account of any expedition, construction of camps, or building of bridges.

"They shall not demand of them horses, carriages, or boats, labor, tributes, or gifts; but the monks of Radynge, their servants, and possessions, shall be free from all tribute, taxes, and all other customs, by land and by water, in passing bridges, and in the sea ports, throughout all England.

\* Chausega, vulgo Cheasey. Erat hic, &c. Here was anciently a noble monastery, but it fell in that calamity wherein the Danes destroyed the whole province of the Attrebatii. Cholsey was afterwards restored to its ancient dignity, and had, as I collect, canons, whom they called prebendaries. The table of donations in the abbey of Reading, mentions of Roger the deacon of Cholsey. This clearly appears that Henry, surnamed Beauclerc, king of England, endowed his magnificent new abbey at Reading, with the lands of Leominster and Cholsey, pitying, as it is said, the neglected state of religion in those places. From which time Cholsey was an appurtenance to Reading. Now it is a small village, famous for nothing but the fruitful crops it affords its owner.—Leland.

† The priory of Leominster, originally a monastery for nuns, said to have been founded by Merewalcus, king of Mercia, about 1656, thus became a cell to Reading, under the jurisdiction of the abbot and monks, who appointed the prior and all the officers belonging to the priory. At the dissolution, it was valued, according to Tanner, at 660l. 18s. 8d. out of which the abbot and monks were used to receive 448l. but according to Price, in his history of Leominster, the temporalities of the priory, in the reign of Edward I. amounted to 581l. 3s. 8d. out of which the abbot and monks received 480l. and consequently at the time of the dissolution, their revenue from this priory must have been much greater than it is stated by Tanner.

In 1434, the corporation of Leominster claimed of the abbot and monks 24 acres of arable land in Portman's-moor, in the parishes of Leominster and Eye, but the cause being tried at the Hereford assizes that year, a verdict was given in favor of the abbot and monks.—Price's History of Leominster.

" And the abbot and his monks shall have power to try all offences com- CHAP. mitted within and without the borough, in the highways, and in all other. places, whether by their own servants or strangers, with all causes which can or may arise, with socca\* and sacca, tol and theam, and infangentheft, and outfangenthelf, | and ham socna within the borough and without the borough, in the roads and foot paths, and in all places, and with all causes which do or may arise.

"And the abbot and his monks shall hold courts of justice for trials of assaults, thefts, and murders, for the shedding of blood, and breaches of the peace, and all other crimes, in the same manner as belongs to the royal authority; And if the abbot and monks shall in any case neglect to do justice, the king may compel them to do it, so as the right of the church of Reading may in no case be infringed.

"And the men of the neighbouring manors, shall come to the hundreds courts of Reading and Leominster, according to the custom of former times; and if they shall refuse to come, the king shall receive their fine, and compel them to appear and to perform their duty.

"We decree also, as well in respect of the ecclesiastical, as regal power, that whenever the abbot of Radynge shall die, all the possessions of the monastery wheresoever situated, shall remain free and entire, with all its rights and customs, in the hands, and at the disposal, of the prior and chapter of the monks of Radynge. But, this also we determine and appoint to be for ever observed, that seeing the abbot of Radynge has no revenues but what are in common with his brethren, therefore whoever by divine consent, and canonical election, shall be made abbot, shall not bestow the alms of the monastery on his lay kindred, or any others, but for the entertainment of the poor and strangers.\*\*

\* Socca, the place or precinct wherein liberty of court was exercised.

+ Sacca, a liberty granted by the king to try and judge causes, and to receive the forfeitures arising from them.

‡ Theam, a privilege to take and keep bondsmen, villains and slaves, with their generations one

Infangentheft, a liberty to judge and try a thief, taken within the jurisdiction of a manor or burg. | Outfangentheft, the same for any thief taken out of their fees.

I Ham socna, the levying a fine on the disturbers of the king's peace.

\*\* This part of the charter, Malmsbury testifies, was so well performed, that there was always more expended upon strangers, than upon the inhabitants, "the monks being," as he asserts, "great examples of piety." But the author of the Henriade, speaking of this order of ascetics says, that

Bornant à leurs besoins, tous leurs soins paternels, Vivaient dans l'abondance, à l'ombre des autels.

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"He may not enfeoff the assessed land, (terras censuales)\* nor shall he make knights; but, in the holy garment of Christ, he must be careful in his acceptation of children, but he may receive aged, and discreet people, as well laymen as clergymen.†

"No person shall hold any of the possessions of the abbey of Radynge wholly (absolutum) in fee, the but shall pay to the abbot and monks an annual

rent and service.

"None shall hold any office by inheritance, in the house and possessions at Radynge, belonging to the abbot and monks, but the abbot and monks shall take cognizance of every principal (præpositer) or other officer, and remove them when they think fit.

"I give, and confirm for ever, to this monastery of Radynge, and to whatever belongs to it, all the above immunities, free and undiminished; which, for the sake of God, I recommend to all those kings of England who shall reign after me to preserve; that God may preserve them for ever.

"But if any body shall knowingly presume to infringe, diminish, or to change, this our foundation charter, may the great God of all withdraw and eradicate him and his posterity, and may he remain without any inheritance

\* Lands guildable, that is, not waste grounds, but manured lands, by no liberty or franchise exempt, but subject to taxation.—Antiquarian Discourses.

+ Nec faciat milites. These were spiritual, not secular knights, or such as were created by kings, as Mr. Tate observes, who in treating of this clause in the charter, gives the following explanation of the passage: "Though I restrain you from making knights, yet my meaning is not to restrain you from making all kind of knights. The making of secular knights to defend the realm, by service done by themselves in person, or by others in their behalf, I will reserve to myself, and secular men; but the making of knights to do service to Christ, whether they be clerks or laymen, I leave free to you, so you make none but such as purpose to take upon them the habit of your profession, advising you only to be very sparing in receiving infants into the profession of your order, that are unable to judge themselves how they shall have power to perform their vows." Sir Francis Leigh also observes, "that besides knights of a higher degree, the abbot made inferiour ones, who were always remaining in the house of the abbot, and in the Book of Reading;\* he adds, their diet, with the manner of their allowance in the abbot's houses, is set down, and their place before esquires, so that these milites there made and harboured, could not have been soldiers."—Antiquarian Discourses.

‡ Adam de Simplinges was charged with certain scutages,† for half a knight's fee, holden of the abbey of Reading. The ancient kings of England had granted to that abbey, that they should be quit of scutage, for the lands they had already acquired, or should afterwards acquire. King Henry III. confirmed to them that freedom, of his special grace, and so that the same might not be drawn into consequence or precedent, And by virtue of a writ directed to the barons of the exchequer, testifying the said grants, Adam was discharged of the said several scutages; and the abbey were to be scutage free for the time to come.—Madox's History and Antiquities of the Exchequer, page 468.

\* Probably the leger-book of the abbey, which I have not been able to obtain a sight of.

<sup>+</sup> A scutage was, servitum scuti, for every knight's fee, the service of one knight .- bid.

in misery and hunger; but, whosoever shall preserve the above-mentioned CHAP. liberties to the abbey of Radynge, may the Most High, who ruleth the hearts of men, confirm to him all good things, and preserve him for ever.

"I Henry, &c." Here follows the names of the queen, the pope's legate, three archbishops, eight bishops, five abbots, and ten noblemen, viz. Robert, earl of Gloucester; William, earl of Surrey; Roger, earl of Warwick; Stephen, earl of Albermarle; William, earl of Tancaville, the chamberlain; Brien-fitz-count, counstable of Wallingford castle; Humfrey de Bohun; Robert de Haia; William fitz-Odo; and Hugh Bigot; who witnessed the charter, which is dated in the year 1125."\*

This charter was afterwards confirmed by most, if not all the succeeding kings, who considerably enlarged the possessions and privileges of the abbot and monks, and particularly by the following charter, containing a full account of all their estates, and an enlargement of all their privileges:

"Henricus, rex Angliæ, &c. Henry, king of England, duke of Normandy, earl of Anjou. To all archbishops, bishops, abbots, priors, barons, &c.

" know ye that we have granted, and by this our charter confirmed to God, and St. Mary, and to the monks of Radynge, in perpetual alms, all the lands, tenures, and alms, which king Henry the grandfather of king Henry our father, † and all other benefactors have granted and given; that is to say, Radynge itself, and Cholsey, and Leominster, with all their appendages, with woods, fields, and pastures, with meads and waters, with mills and fisheries, with churches and chapels, and burial-grounds, oblations, and tythes, with a mint at Radynge or London; Thatcham and the church of Wargrave; the church of Henneberg, and Rokinton in Warwickshire with its church; and Wigestan which was the land of William the Almoner. And in Wiltsbire, Wycheber with its church. And in Bedfordshire, the land of Albod of Hoctun, and the land of Robert the priest of Hamton, and the land which Robert

\* In addition to king Henry, the original founder of the abbey, the abbot and monks were indebted to the following benefactors at different periods, for the increase of their possessions:

Matilda and Adaliza, queens of Henry I.; William and Richard, sons of Henry I. the founder; Brientius; Jocelinus Percy; Ranulphus, the king's chancellor, and his son; Robert Achard, and Agnes his wife; Ada Hertington; Ela (countess); David, king of Scotland; William, earl of Pembroke; Nicholas de la Ruge; Rogerus, earl; Ida, countess; Hugo Mortimer; William Huntercumbe; Roger Lifford; Roger, dean of Cholsey; Osbert, dean of Leominster; Reginald, duke of Cornwall; Warin, the son of Gerald, &c .- Leland's Collectanea, vol. 1. fol. 69.

+ This charter, though professed to be granted in the name of Henry II. must have originated from one of his sons who succeeded him, either Richard or John; Henry was the son of Geoffrey Plantagenet, earl of Anjou, and therefore could not be the son of king Henry, as is here erroneously stated; and as Richard spent most of his reign in foreign parts, I am inclined to believe that this was the charter said to have been granted to the abbot and monks by king John.

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de Ferres had in the town of Radynge, and also which Amalric gave to them in Kareswell and in Burgfield; and the land which William earl of Mandeville gave to them in Recendenc. And the land of Whitley which Peter of Cosham granted and confirmed to them by his charter. And Heston in Hertfordshire, with its church and all its appertenances. Also the park which the lord the king our father gave and confirmed to them. And one fair at Radynge on the day of St. James and the three following days. And one fair at Leominster, on the day of the feast of St. Peter and St. Paul and the three following days. Also the land which William earl of Sussex gave them in Quindenam. And the land which William earl of Ferrers gave to them in Stanford. Also the land which Henry the son of Gerald gave to them in Sebrithsworth. And the land which Michael de Baseville gave to them in Lichbroc. And the land which Lawrence the holds of me in Rancebrig. And the land which Radulf de Offenton gave to them. And the church of Englefield with its appertenances. And the land which Stephen de Morton gave them in the suburbs of Warwic, and which the empress Matilda our grandmother gave and granted to them, that is to say, Blewberry with all its appertenances, and Hendred, and the church of Berkley, with its churches, chapels, and all its appertenances. And the church of Stanton with all its appertenances. And the church of Thatcham with its appertenances, with a market to be held on Sundays in that town, And Hyde and Underor with alltheir appertenances. Let no person great or small demand any thing as of right, custom, or violence, from the men, lands, and possessions of the monastery of Radynge, neither horses nor messengers, (expeditiones) neither for building of bridges, or forming camps, neither carriages, nor rents, ships, works, tributes, nor hospitality, nor lestage, nor techinpeny nor tinpeny, and let them be exempt from all waste of woods and of essarts.\* No one of the king's foresters may enter the woods belonging to the abbot and monks which are in the forest; but the abbot and monks may have the same power and liberty of entering to their own woods, wheresoever they may be, as the king himself. And the monks of Radynge, and all their men and possessions, shall be free from Danegelt,+ geldage, thvdage, and pontage, tolls, and all other exactions and customs, in fairs and markets wheresoever they may be, in land or by water, in passing of bridges and sea-ports throughout all England, Normandy, and all our possessions. In witness, &c,"

<sup>\*</sup> Essarts, the grubbing or clearing the ground from bushes, &c.

<sup>+</sup> Danegelt, a tax of one shilling for every hide of land, imposed by king Ethelred, to redeem the nation from the incursions of the Danes.

<sup>†</sup> Geldage, the payment of taxes. § Hydage, a tribute raised on every hide of land.

| Toll paid for the passage of bridges.

Pope Innocent III, anno domini 1207, granted the following letters of CHAP. confirmation to the abbot and convent of Reading of the cluniac order:

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"The holy Roman church, out of her usual motherly affection, doth most tenderly love her dutiful and humble children; and, like a kind mother, defends them, with the guard of her protection, against all the disturbances which evil men would give them. For this reason, my beloved sons in the Lord, having willingly consented to your just requests, we do receive under the protection of St. Peter and ourself the monastery of Radynge, where you are devoted to the divine obedience, together with all the goods which it is at present reasonably possessed of, and which it may for the future obtain by just methods, and the help of the Lord, and also all the persons that serve God therein.

" And, more particularly we do, by our apostolical authority, and further by the privilege of this present writing, confirm to you the churches, chapels, lands, possessions, revenues, liberties, and immunities, and whatsoever else you have obtained of the pentiffs, or bounty of kings, or princes, or by purchase, or by gift, or by offerings of the faithful, or by any other just methods, in the same manner as you now enjoy them, justly and peaceably, strictly forbidding any one to presume rashly to molest you, or your monastery, concerning any of the privileges or grants of our predecessors, Roman pontiffs, No one, therefore, shall infringe our protection, confirmation, inhibition, &c.

"Given at St. Peter's at Rome, the 14th kalends of March, in our tenth year."

"To the abbot of Radynge and his brethren, as well those present as the future, professing a regular life for ever.

" It, though undeserving, are assumed to the dignity of chief pontiff, by the disposal of the divine mercy, that we might, with a partial care, and tenderness, employ ourselves for the state of all the churches, and afford them the patronage of the apostolical see, that God may be the more worshipped in them, the more quiet they are from the molestation of evil minded persons.

"Therefore, my beloved sons in the Lord, we have, out of our elemency, yielded to your desires, and do take into St. Peter's and our protection, the above named monastery of St. Mary of Radynge, of the cluniac order, wherein you are devoted to the divine obedience, and do confirm the same by the privilege of the present writing. Appointing first, that the monastic order, according to God, and the rule of St. Benedict, which is instituted in the monastery, be inviolably preserved there for all succeeding times.

"And further, that all possessions of goods, which the monastery now possesses, justly and canonically, or that hereafter by the grant of pontiffs, the



bounty of kings or princes, by the gift of the faithful, or by any other just methods, with the help of the Lord obtained, shall remain firm, and untouched, to you and your successors, among which we thought proper to remark these, by our express words; Radynge, Cholsey, and Leominster, with the churches, chapels, church-yards, tenths, offerings, together with the woods, fields, pastures, meadows, waters, mills, fish-ponds, or fisheries, with all other the appertenances, Thatcham with its appertenances, and the church of Wargrave, Whitley with its appertenances, Wichbury with its appertenances, Blewbury with its appertenances, the land which you have in Henrede with its appertenances, Rockenton with the church of the same village and all its appertenances, the churches of Stanton, of Haneborke, and of Inglesfielde, with their appertenances, Dudlesfaude with all its appertenances, the land which you have in Heitum with its appertenances, also the land which you have in Lingeborche and in Stratfield, which was Hugh de Mortimer's, and in Ebricheteswerde with all their appertenances, the lands and rents which you have in London, and Berchamstede with their appertenances, the land which you are possessed of below the tenement of Hon, in the name of the dower of your church, with its appertenances, the priory of May, with its appertenances, and Lindgross in Scotland, with its appertenances.

"Also, let no one presume to demand or extort from you, the tenth of your ploughed lands, which you till with your own hands, or at your expence, or of the tenths of the increase of your cattle.

"But when there shall be a general interdict of the kingdom, you may, after shutting your gates, and keeping out the excommunicated, and interdicted, without tolling the bell, celebrate divine service in a low voice.

"We do also, by our apostolical authority, inhibit any one to publish a sentence of excommunication, or an interdict against you, or your monastery, without a manifest and reasonable cause, or to oppress you with new and undue exactions.

"We command, also, the chrism, or sacred oil, for the consecration of churches, or for the ordination of monks, and others of your clerks, who shall be promoted to holy orders by the bishop of your diocess, provided he be a catholic, and has the grace and communion of the apostolic see, to be given to you gratis, and without any abuse.

"Furthermore, we do, by apostolical authority, forbid any one building a church or oratory, within the parishes of your churches, without the consent of the bishop of the diocess, and the chapter of Radynge; the privileges of the Roman pontiff, notwithstanding, being preserved.

"Also, being willing to provide for your peace and tranquility for the

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future, by our fatherly care, we do, by our apostolical authority, forbid any one to commit rapine or theft, put fire, shed blood, rashly to seize or kill any man, or act any violence, within the limits or places of your granges; and, further, we do, by our apostolical authority, confirm, and, by the privilege of the present writing, do strengthen all liberties, and immunities, granted by our predecessors, Roman pontiffs, to your monastery, and also all liberties, immunities, and exemptions, from secular exactions, which have been granted to you, by kings and princes, and others of the faithful.

"We do therefore decree it to be unlawful for any person whatsoever, rashly to disturb the monastery, or to take away its possessions, or to keep them when taken away by others, or lessen them, or molest them with any manner of vexation, but that they shall all be preserved entire for the government and support, and all other general uses, of those for whom they were given: the authority of the apostolical see, and the canonical power of the bishop of the diocess being preserved.

"If therefore any ecclesiastical or secular person shall, knowingly, endeavor rashly to controvert these our constitutions, after the second and third admonition, and doth not amend his fault, by making a proper satisfaction, let him be deprived of the dignity of his power or honor, and know that he is guilty before God, for the iniquity he hath committed, and is debarred from partaking of the most sacred body and blood of God, &c. until his punishment. But the peace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with all those, who preserve all the laws to this place, &c. to the end. Amen.

"Given at the Lateran, by the hand of John of Mary in Cormidin, cardinal deacon, chancellor of the holy Roman church, the 10th of the kalends of April: of the indiction the 9th of the incarnation of our Lord 1207, and of the pontificate of our Lord, pope Innocent III, the 10th year."

David king of Scotland also conferred on the abbot and monks, the two priories of Rindalgos and May, in that kingdom, which in consequence became cells to the abbey: but these priories appearing to have been formerly appendages to the bishopric of St. Andrew's, they were soon after restored to that see, by the abbot of Reading. However, William de Sutton, one of the succeeding abbots, pretending the alienation had been made without the consent of the monks, presented a petition to Edward I. requesting they might be restored; whereupon the bishop appealed to the pope, and the validity of his claim being admitted by the court in Scotland, to which it had been referred, the abbot again applied to Edward in 1293, who, as lord paramount of Scotland, summoned king Baliol to appear personally before him, fifteen days after

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martinmass, but it does not appear how the affair was determined, though, it is probable the troubles, which ensued in that kingdom, put an end to the dispute, and left the bishop in possession of the priories.

The empress Maud or Matilda gave them the manors of Blewbury and East Hendred, in the hundred of Reading, but in what year is unknown.

In the reign of Edward III. the privilege of coining money, granted them by Henry I. their founder, but of which they had been deprived in the late reign, was again restored to them by the following order from his majesty, entered in the charter-mint:

" Rex dilecto sibi Johanni de Flete, &c.

"The king, to his well beloved John de Flete, keeper of our mint in London, health.

"Cothereas, by our charter, we have granted to our beloved in Christ, the abbot and monks of Radyng, that they and their successors for ever, may have one mint, and one die at the aforesaid place (locum) of Radyng, there, for money, viz. as well for the coining of farthings, (obolos) half-farthings, (ferlingos) as for pennies, (sterlingos) as the manner is for coining, and as is more fully expressed in our aforesaid charter. We command you therefore, that without delay you cause to be made and fabricated, at the expense of the abbot, three dies, of hard and competent metal, viz. one for pennies, another for farthings, and a third for half-farthings, for the coining of money at the said place of Radyng, and with whatsoever impression and circumscription the abbot shall order; and to send them to our treasury at Westminster as soon as possible, that from thence, within fifteen days next after the feast of St. Martin, at the farthest, they may, for the cause aforesaid, be delivered to the abbot.

"T. J. de Shardiche, apud Westminster, the 18th of November, in the tenth year of our reign."

This privilege, however, they seem to have used very sparingly, as only one doubtful specimen of the abbey coin is now to be found in the cabinets of the curious, and not even one has been found within the town itself, where, if they had ever been in any numbers, some of them must, in the course of three or four centuries, have been discovered.\*

4 Act. Pub.

<sup>\*</sup> Mr. Coates has given an engraving, in his History of Reading, of what he supposes to be an abbey penny; but there is reason to think, from its similarity to all the pieces coined in the reign of the Edwards, that it is nothing more than the common coin of the kingdom, struck at Reading, it being usual in those times, for such pieces to be circumscribed with the names of the places they were coined at, as villa Kingston, villa Carlisle, &c.; and in like manner, villa Radinge on this, may only denote

They had moreover the privilege of holding a fair on the festival of St. Lawrence, and the following day; and, by the charter of Henry II, (if it be his) on the festival of St. James, with the same number of days, and the liberty of holding a market every Sunday at Thatcham. King John likewise granted them the power of holding a fair on the vigil of the feast of St. Philip and St. James, on the day of the festival, and the two following ones.

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By a prohibition issued by the bishop of Salisbury, to the archdeacon of Berks, the deans, and all the clergy of the diocess; no person was allowed to keep a school within the borough, without the consent of the abbot and monks.

The abbot of Reading was called a mitred abbot, having a seat in parliament, and took precedency next after those of Glastonbury and St. Albans. In the 49th of Henry III, sixty-four abbots were summoned to parliament, but these being afterwards thought too many to have seats in the house of lords, Edward III. reduced them to twenty-five, among whom the abbot of Reading was included, who retained the privilege uninterrupted 'till the dissolution.

"The monks took their title of Benedictines from their founder St. Benedict, a native of Nursia, in the dukedom of Spoleto in Italy, who was born about the year 480, and died in 543.

"The form and color of the habits of these monks, were at first left to the discretion of the abbots, who varied them according to the season and climate, but it was afterwards ordained, that they should wear a loose gown of black stuff reaching down to the heels, with a cowl or hood of the same, and a scapulary; under this another habit of the same size, made of white flannel, and boots on their legs. From the color of their outward garments, they were called black monks.

"In order that no man might have any particular propriety, the abbot found them in every necessary; which, besides their habit, was a knife, a

its having been coined here. Had it been coined by the abbot, it is reasonable to suppose, it would have been denoted either by the name of the abbot, or canobium Radynge, as they were authorised to do by the above order, and not merely by villa, which signifies the town only. The real difference between this and the common coin is, that instead of the three pellets in each of the four compartments on the reverse, this is supposed to have the representation of a scallop shell in one of them. I have not seen the piece in question, and therefore cannot say if the engraving is a fac-simile or not, but allowing it to be so, it is not a sufficient proof of its being an abbey penny, because, if meant to represent the abbey arms, all the three scallop shells would have been represented, which might as easily have been done as one. For these reasons I am inclined to think, that this supposed abbey penny is no other than the common coin of Edward IV. to which, except in the single cockle-shell, it is perfectly similar.

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needle, a steel pen, and tablets to write on. Their beds consisted of a mat, some straw, and a pillow, their covering a blanket and a piece of serge."

We have no account of the diet of the monks at Reading, but from the following corrody granted to John Mawne by the abbot, out of the manor of Leominster, we may conclude it was very ample.

"Linow all men, by these presents, that we Thomas, by divine permission, abbot of the monastery of Radyng, and the convent of the same place, to our chosen in Christ, John Mawne of Ascheton, esq. for the service he has done us, and what he shall do hereafter, have granted him maintenance in victuals and drink, for his life, in our manor of Leominster, viz. While the said John is well, and in the hall there, he shall be served at dinner and supper, as the fellow monks are, except on flesh days in Advent, Septuagessima, Sexagessima, and Quinquagessima, on which days he shall be served as the other esquires are. And if he be sick, or absent for any reasonable cause, he shall have the same maintenance in his chamber within our manor, and he shall receive. yearly, during his life, one robe of the suit of our esquires, and four loads of fuel in our said manor, a chamber which Wm. Mason, chaplain, inhabited. and a stable for one horse to be kept with hay only, and we further grant to the said John, that whilst he dwells in the town of Leominster, or elsewhere out of the bounds of the said manor, he shall receive every day two white (monks) loaves, and one wheaten or pricked loaf, one flaggon and a half of the best ale, one mess and a half of flesh or fish, according to the day; provided that in those days he dines in the hall, he shall not receive the said allowance, &c."

As this corrody was granted him on occasion of his being absent from the hall at meal times, it is, probably, nearly the same as that allowed to the monks, with whom, at other times, he dined."\*

In addition to performing the regular offices of the church, the monks were employed in transcribing books for the library, the missals, and other offices used in divine service: they also kept the leger books,† containing the

<sup>\*</sup> Mr. Elis, in his antiquities of St. Leonard's, Shoreditch, on the origin of the technical appel lation of costard-monger, observes, "it is plain that it was an apple in repute with the monks of Reading, as appears from an article in Cowel's Law Dictionary. Costard, an apple, whence costard-mongers, that is, sellers of apples. The article is in a deed, by which the above monks require as an annual acknowledgment, unum pomun costard."

<sup>+</sup> Hearne, in his preliminary observations on Brown Willis's Mitred Abbeys, mentions a register or leiger-book of the abbey of Reading, in the possession of the honorable Henry Worseley, esq.; and Tanner, in his Notitia Monastica, mentions it as a very considerable work, as no doubt it was; but I have searched the public libraries in London, as well as the British Museum, without being so fortunate as to meet with it.

2 Grosc's Antiquities.

transactions in the house; they had, moreover, particular persons among them appointed to take notice of and record the principal events that took place in the kingdom, which, at the end of the year, were digested and formed into annals.

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Among the learned men that this monastery produced, may be reckoned Robert of Reading, who, with Adelard of Bath, were the only two Englishmen in the early period of our history who were famous for their knowledge of the Arabian language. They returned into England in the reign of Henry I. after they had spent several years in the East, learning that language and translating books out of it into Latin.

Robert de Sigillo, made bishop of London in 1142, where he sat eleven years. Geofry of Magnaville took him prisoner. Deceased in 1152.

William of Reading, archbishop of Bourdeaux, born here in the reign of Henry III.

Friar John Lathbury, who wrote a commentary on the Lamentations, and John Holyman, whom Hugh, the last abbot, in a letter to one of the universities, characterizes as "Dominus Holymannus, non vitâ, minus quam eruditione, theologus insignis. Londini nuper e suggesto Paulino concionatus est, &c." At the dissolution of the abbey, in 1535, he retired to Harborough, near Woodstock, where he was rector, and was afterwards promoted to the see of Bristol. By his last will, dated the 4th of June 1558, in which year he died, he gave to Winchester college the works of St. Augustine, St. Jerome, St. Cyprian, St. Cecil, Tertullian, Ireneus, &c. which were afterwards, for their better preservation, chained to the library there.

Leland says, he found at Leicester a work written by Hugh, abbot of Reading, intitled "Quæstiones instar Dialogi."

"The abbot," says Leland, "had a fair manor place of bricke, at Bere-Court." Hugh Faringdon, the last abbot, seems to have preferred it for his country residence. In the east window of the chapel was his picture in stained glass, habited in his robes, and kneeling before a desk, with a book open upon it, out of his mouth proceeded a scroll inscribed with these words:

## "In te Domine speravi."

This house afterwards came into the possession of sir Francis Englefield, but lapsing to the crown, in the reign of queen Elizabeth, it was disposed of as part of the manor of Pangbourn, and is now the property of doctor Symonds Breedon.

The abbot is supposed to have had another seat at Bucklebury, now the

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property of — Hartley, esq. but Mr. Grose, with more probability, thinks it was at Cholsey, that being also an appendage to the abbey, and famous for its great barn, yet standing. In the ceiling of the church, over the chancel, are the arms of the abbey, apparently carved on wood, in excellent preservation.

Whitley, in the neighborhood of Reading, was also a seat belonging to the abbey, containing a large park, pleasure grounds, fish ponds, &c. but these have long since been converted into a farm. It was granted by queen Mary to sir Francis Englefield, became afterwards the property of the Vatchels, by whom it was disposed of to the Thompsons, and is now the property of Miss Jennings.

From the number of these residences, there is reason to suppose, they were not all belonging to the abbey, but were probably the private property of different abbots, where they occasionally retired, whenever their religious duties would permit them to be absent from the abbey, and where they might enjoy themselves without that restriction naturally attendant on high situations.

This abbey was in the king's gift, or at least no abbot could be chosen without his consent, as appears from the following memorandum, in the Closeroll, when Henry III. sailed to Gascony:

"Rex omnibus, &c. salutem. Cum gubernationem regni nostri Angliæ, et terrarum nostrarum Walliæ, et Hyberniæ, commiserimus dilectæ Reginæ nostræ Alienoræ, una cum consilio dilecti fratris, et fidelis nostri Ricardi comitis Cornubiæ, usque ad reditum nostrum de partibus Wasconiæ: Volumus, quod cum archiepiscopatus et episcopatus prædicti regni nostri Angliæ et episcopatus Menevensis in Wallia, vacaverint, a nobis petatur licentia eligendi; et factis electionibus, noster super hoc requiratur assensus; et hoc idem fieri volumus de abbatiis Westmonasterii, Waltham, Sancti Edmundi, Ramesiæ, Burgi S. Petri, S. Albani, Radingæ, Oseneyæ, Cirencestriæ, de Hida, Glastoniæ vacante sede, Malmesburiæ, S. Petri Gloucestriæ, Evesham, S. Mariæ Eboraci, et S. Augustini Cantuariæ. In cujus, &c."

<sup>3</sup> Madox's History and Antiquities of the Exchequer, p. 47.

## Abbots.

## CHAPTER XIII.

HUGH, prior of Lewes, in Sussex, was the first abbot of Reading, being appointed by Henry, immediately after the abbey was completed. In 1129, he was translated to the bishopric of Rouen, in Normandy, where he died on the 10th of November, 1134. On his promotion to the see of Rouen, he was succeeded in his abbacy by

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Ausgerus, called in the Monasticon, Aucherius; he founded in Reading an hospital for lepers, in honor of St. Mary Magdalene, near St. Lawrence's church.

According to the original institution, every leper was allowed half a loaf a day, half-a-gallon of middling beer, five-pence a month for meat, seven-pence for their servants, and every year a cloak, a vest, a mantle, two shirts, and all other wollens.

The rules of the hospital were, that if any brother was found guilty of adultery, or struck another in anger, he was to be expelled.

They were to rise at the first ringing of the bell, to go to church. He that gave another the lie, was to fast the whole day on bread and water; if he resented it, he was to fast the second day; and if he was still angry the third day, to loose the charity for forty days.

No one was to go abroad without a companion. If any thing were given to one abroad, it was to be in common, unless given particularly by kindred or friends. None were to go abroad without leave, nor into their laundresses houses without a companion.

This abbot deceased in 1135, and was succeeded by

Edward, who presided over the abbey nearly twenty years, dying in Dc-cember 1154, and was followed by

Reginald, who governed only four years, he having deceased the 4th of February, 1158, and was succeeded by

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Roger, in whose time, 1163, the abbey church was dedicated by archbishop Thomas Becket; king Henry II. and many of the nobility being present; so that supposing it to have been begun soon after finishing the abbey, the church was nearly forty years in building; he died in the following year, and was succeeded by

William, who was esteemed a very pious and learned man, and by the special favor of Henry II. was made archbishop of Bourdeaux, in 1173, whereupon

Joseph was appointed to succeed him, who enjoyed his pre-eminence seven years, when it devolved on

Hugh II. a learned writer, and a great benefactor to the monastery. He crected an hospital without the gate of the abbey, for the maintenance of twenty-six poor people, and dedicated it to St. Lawrence; the reason he gives for this charity in his deed, is, that whereas king Henry had appointed all persons to be entertained there, he found that the same was performed in a decent manner towards the rich, but not according to the king's intention towards the poor; which miscarriage, he, as steward of that noble charity, was resolved to correct. For this reason, and for the relief of the poor and pilgrims, he built an hospital without the gate of the abbey, that such as were not admitted to the upper house, might there be well entertained, and annexed it to the church of St. Lawrence for ever, for the maintaining of thirteen poor persons in diet, clothing, and other necessaries, with maintenance only for the same number, out of the usual alms. He was author of a work, entitled Quæstiones instar Dialogi. In 1199, he was made abbot of Cluncy, and in the following year was suceeded by

Helias, who after enjoying the title about twelve years, had for his successor, in 1213,

Simon, who died in the middle of February 1226, and was succeeded by Adam de Latebar, or Lathbury, prior of Leominster, in Herefordshire, a cell to the abbey, on whose decease, in April 1238,

Richard, the sub-prior of this monastery, was appointed his successor, he enjoyed the seat but a short time, being succeeded by

Adam, who held it 'till 1249, when he resigned in favor of

Adam, the sacrist of this house, on whose death or resignation, the same year,

William, sub-prior of Coventry, was installed abbot, but holding his seat but a short period also, he was succeeded by

Richard, who dying in 1261, was succeeded by

Leland's Collectanea.

Richard de Banaster, alias de Radyng; he presided eight years, and was succeeded by

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Robert de Burghare,\* who in 1287, resigned the abbotship to William de Sutton, but he dying in 1305, was succeeded by

Nicholas de Quaplode, whose election was confirmed in September 1305. He laid the foundation of the chapel, dedicated to the Virgin Mary, in 1314, and dying in 1327, had for his successor

John Appleford, who dying after twenty years possession, in July 1360, had for his successor, †

William de Dombleton, who was confirmed abbot anno 1361; Tanner says he had met with one Nicholas, an abbot of Reading, in 1362, but this must be a mistake, for William Dombleton died possessed of the abbey in 1368, and was then succeeded by John de Sutton, upon whose death in 1378,

Richard de Yately was elected abbot; it is uncertain when he died, but it probably was not prior to 1409, in which year Thomas Earle was elected abbot, and continued to preside over the abbey 'till his death in 1430, when he was succeeded by,

Thomas Henley, who, dying on the 11th of November 1445,

John Thorne was preferred to the dignity on the 7th of January following; in whose time the present free school was founded, but dying before the settlement could be effected, anno 1486, in the 2d of Henry VIIth, was succeeded by another

John Thorne, who held the dignity till 1519, when he died, and was succeeded by

Thomas de Worcester, who governed the abbey but a short time, being succeeded in the following year by,

\* About this period a Jew, having forged the abbey seal of St. Alban's, affixed it to two deeds, purporting to be for one hundred marks, which the Jew had lent the abbey, and that the monks had pawned, for sums of money certain of their valuable trinkets, as golden crowns, and precious stones, two cups of gold, of 24 pounds weight, besides three hundred silver spoons. The like fraud was found to have been committed on the abbey of Reading, where the Jew being taken and prosecuted, suffered death as a cheat and impostor, confessing the fraud. And it was supposed that some Jew had corrupted the keepers of the seals here, and by their connivance had purloined the plate and jewels.—Newcombe's History of St. Albans.

+ The monks of several abbeys being at this time accused of many vices and irregularities, Edward III. appointed the abbot of St. Alban's to visit them, as president of the general chapter, on which occasion, he brought back, at Reading, many to the rule, who had wandered far from it; and some of the monks, who had formed conspiracies against the abbot, he caused to be sent away to the cells; he also brought others thence to his own monastery, to undergo some sort of punishment, until they manifested a penitence.—Ibid.

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Hugh Faringdon, the thirty-first and last abbot of Reading, under whose presidency the monastery was dissolved, in 1539, and the revenues applied to the use of the crown. Though this abbot, like most of his predecessors, cannot be considered a learned man himself, yet he was a great patron of such as excelled in any of the branches of literature. When the commissioners for the suppression of the monastery arrived, they could find no exceptions, either to his moral or religious behavior, in the administration of his duties, and doctor London, one of the commissioners, in a letter to sir Thomas Cromwell, says, that " Lectures were read in the chapter-house every day in Latin and English, on some portion of the scriptures, which were well attended, as the abbot was commonly present at them himself; adding that he very readily gave up his relics, and they made no doubt, but his majesty would find him as conformable a man as any in the realm." Notwithstanding, however, the favorable light in which his conduct is here represented by the commissioners, it was not sufficient to save him from the rage of a merciless tyrant, when, from an unfortunate prejudice imbibed in his earliest years, he conscientiously refused to acknowledge the king's newly usurped supremacy in ecclesiastical affairs. For this offence, which ought to have been wholly imputed to a religious adherence to what he considered the truth, and deserving rather of pity than punishment, he was sentenced with two of his fellow monks, Rugg and Onion, to be hanged and quartered, as a traitor to his king and country; which sentence was put in execution at Reading, in the month of November 1539, seven months after the dissolution of the abbey.

The officers belonging to the abbot, were-

| 0 0                       |          |                                |          |
|---------------------------|----------|--------------------------------|----------|
|                           | per ann. |                                | per ann. |
| The marshal, or master of | s. d.    | Second and third ditto,        | 4 0      |
| the horse,                |          | Dean of the wardrobe,          | 8 0      |
| The panterer,             | 8 0      | Hostler,                       | 1 0      |
| Dean of the chambers, -   | 8 0      | Baker,                         | 4 0      |
| Porter,                   | 8 0      | Second and third ditto,        | 4 0      |
| The pages,                |          | First smith, -                 | 13 4     |
| The cook, -               |          | Second ditto, -                | 6 0      |
| The scullion,             | 1 2      | Keeper of the abbot's palfrey, | 4 0      |
| Dean of the chambers,     | 8 0      | Gardener,                      | 4 0      |
| Butler, or manciple,      | 4 0      | Miller                         | 2 0      |

with other inferior officers.

"As a proof of the splendor of this establishment, it appears that in abbot Quaplode's time, about the year 1305, when great economy was thought necessary to be adopted, on account of the monastery being then in debt, and

a reduction of their household was resolved on, no less than thirty-seven servants were retained."

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The following livings were in the patronage of the abbots:

The vicarage of Bucklebury; the vicarage of Thatcham, with the chapels of Greenham and Midgham; the vicarages of the three parishes in Reading; the vicarage of Warfield alias Burfield; the vicarage of Wargrave; Choulsey alias Cholesey with the chapel of Moulsford; the vicarage of Tilehurst, where the abbot was appropriator; the vicarage of Stanton Harcourt, in Oxfordshire; the vicarage of Rowinton, in Warwickshire; the priory of Leominster with the patronage of Eye, with seven chapels annexed, paying annually to the abbey six shillings and eight pence.<sup>2</sup>

All the above vicarages paid likewise pensions to the abbot, as appears from an old manuscript, in the public library at Oxford, entitled "Liber taxationum omnium beneficiorum in Anglia;" supposed to have been compiled in 1292, as follows: The pension of the abbot of Reading, from

|                                             | ι.   | S.  | d.          |
|---------------------------------------------|------|-----|-------------|
| The church of Thatcham, twenty marks,       | 13   | 6   | 8           |
| The church of Compton, -                    | 0    | 8   | 5           |
| The church of Burhidebury, the abbot rector | r, 8 | 0   | 0           |
| The vicarage of the same,                   | 1    | 0   | 0           |
| The church of Thanse, abbot rector,         | 13   | 6   | 8           |
| The vicarage of the same,                   | 2    | 13  | 4           |
| The church of Beenham, abbot rector,        | 6    | 0   | 0           |
| The church of Englefield,                   | 0    | 13  | 4           |
| The church of Stileham,                     | 0    | 4   | 0           |
| The church of Purley,                       | 0    | 2   | 0           |
| The church of Tyglehurst, abbot rector,     | 10   | 0   | 0           |
| St. Mary's, Reading, abbot rector,          | 8    | 0   | 0           |
| The vicarage of the same, untithable,       | 3    | 0   | 0           |
| St. Giles's, Reading, abbot rector,         | 10   | 0   | 0           |
| The vicarage of the same,                   | 2    | 0   | 0           |
| St. Lawrence's, Reading, with the vicarage  |      |     |             |
| untithable, abbot rector,                   | 5    | 0   | 0           |
| The church of Weregrave, abbot rector,      | 12   | 0   | 0           |
| The vicarage of the same, untithable, -     | 0    | 18  | 0           |
| The church of Silhamstead Abbots, -         | 2    | 0   | 0           |
|                                             | 00   | 1.0 | ~           |
| Total €                                     | 98   | 12  | $\tilde{5}$ |

Lyson's Britannia.

<sup>2</sup> Survey of Cathedrals.

CHAP. XIII. At the dissolution, the revenues belonging to the abbey were estimated at two thousand one hundred and sixteen pounds, three shillings, and nine pence, but, according to Burton, only one thousand nine hundred and ninety eight pounds, fourteen shillings, and three pence, equal, according to the present value of money, to twenty thousand pounds per annum. From this sum, only fifty-nine pounds, thirteen shillings were reserved for the payment of the annuities granted to those monks who, from infirmities or old age, were incapable of gaining their livelihoods; the remainder were turned out to provide for themselves as they could. Those that received pensions for life were,

|                  |   |   |   | l. | 5. | d.           |
|------------------|---|---|---|----|----|--------------|
| Elizeus Burgess, |   | - |   | 6  | 0  | 0 per annum. |
| John Fryson,     | - |   | - | 6  | 0  | 0            |
| John Wright, -   |   | - |   | 6  | 0  | 0            |
| John Harpur,     | - |   | - | 6  | 0  | 0            |
| John Mylly, -    |   | • |   | 6  | 0  | 0            |
| John Turner,     | - |   | • | 6  | 0  | 0            |
| Luke Wythorne,   |   | - |   | 6  | 0  | 0            |
| Thomas Taylor,   | - |   | - | 6  | 0  | 0            |
| Robert Rayner,   |   | • |   | 4  | 6  | 8            |
| John South,      |   |   | • | 3  | 6  | 8            |
| Richard Purser,  |   | - |   | 2  | 0  | 0            |
| Richard Butt,    | - |   | - | 2  | 0  | 0            |
|                  |   |   |   |    |    |              |
|                  |   |   | £ | 59 | 13 | 4            |
|                  |   |   | - |    |    |              |

The remainder of their income, amounting to  $1882l.~9s.~10\frac{1}{2}d.$  was seized by the crown, and afterwards parcelled off, either in gifts or leases, under the name of crown land, to different persons.

A schedule of the revenues of the late dissolved monastery of Reading, 31st of Henry VIIIth:

| Carried forward                                    | £411    | 15   | 6              |
|----------------------------------------------------|---------|------|----------------|
| Burhidebury manor and rectory, -                   | 50      | 0    | $8\frac{1}{2}$ |
| East Hendred manor, given by the empress Maud,     | 38      | 14   | 9              |
| Blewbury manor with its appertenances -            | 121     | 4    | $0_{\rm J}$    |
| Cholsey manor* and rectory with their appertenance | es, 201 | 16   | 0              |
| of field villand                                   |         | . 5. | $a_*$          |

<sup>\*</sup> The manor barn is still in existence, though built prior to the dissolution. Mr. Coates says, it carries upon it the date of 1101, and therefore thinks it might have belonged to the ancient abbey of Cholsey; but this idea is too extravagant to be admitted a moment, as in that case it must now have

|                                                      |    |                 | ~     |
|------------------------------------------------------|----|-----------------|-------|
| Brought over - € 411                                 | 15 | đ.<br>6         | Снар  |
| Thatcham rectory, with Greenham, Midgeham,           | 10 | U               | XIII. |
| Crookham and Colethorp, - 101                        | 6  | 6               |       |
| Pangbourne manor,* 24                                | _  | 4               |       |
| Basyldon manor, 6                                    |    | 5               |       |
| Shyningfield, or Shinfield, tenements and land 9     |    | 0               |       |
| Sonning, manor of Bulmershe and lands, - 7           | 6  | 8               |       |
| Weregrave rectory, 30                                | 0  | 0               |       |
| Borough of Reading.                                  |    |                 |       |
| Rent of assize, 21                                   | 12 | 5               |       |
| Customary rents, 92                                  | 18 | 4               |       |
| Mills. Two grain mills and fulling mills, called St. | 10 | T               |       |
| Giles's mills, with the tythes of the same; a        |    |                 |       |
| fishery called Tan-lock; two other grain mills,      |    |                 |       |
| and a fulling mill, in St. Mary's parish, called     |    |                 |       |
| Mynster-mills, and a fishery called Grey's-lock, 40  | 0  | 0               |       |
|                                                      |    |                 |       |
| Reading Deanery.                                     |    |                 |       |
| Rents in Tilehurst, Whitley, Colley, Greyshull,      |    |                 |       |
| Stratfield-Mortimer, Sulhamsted, Beenham,            |    |                 |       |
| Ufton, Battel (farm) 130                             | 9  | $\frac{1}{2}$   |       |
| The farm of Windsor Underore, - 6                    | 19 | $10\frac{1}{4}$ |       |
| The manor of Whitley, 26                             | 18 | 4               |       |
| Agistment of Whitley Park, 3                         | 0  | 0               |       |
| Calcot mill and lands in Tylehurst parish, - 2       | 13 | 4               |       |
| Fishery of the Kennet, 0                             | 13 | 4               |       |
| Rectory of Beenham, 3                                | 6  | 8               |       |
| Rectories of Tilehurst, Colley, and Whitley, 20      | 0  | 0               |       |
| Carried forward £938                                 | 19 | $9\frac{3}{4}$  |       |
|                                                      |    |                 |       |

existed upwards of seven hundred years, which it is impossible for such a building to have done. Had he considered a moment, he would have recollected that these figures, said to be inscribed on one of the beams, were not introduced in common use, 'till long after the period they were made to commemorate, and therefore must have been a forgery; but the truth is, there is no such inscription in being, as I found on inspection, and from the information of persons living on the spot. It is however the largest barn in England, being 303 feet long, 54 wide, and 51 ligh.

\* Bere-court, in this parish, was given by Bingham, bishop of Salisbury, to the monastery in 1230, and became subsequently the summer residence of the abbots.

CHAT

| P.       | Brought over                                         | £938          | s.<br>19 | $\frac{d.}{9\frac{3}{4}}$ |
|----------|------------------------------------------------------|---------------|----------|---------------------------|
| <u>.</u> | Town of Reading.                                     |               |          |                           |
|          | Tolls of the fairs, -                                | . 1           | 1        | 4                         |
|          | Tolls of the market,                                 | 0             | 7        | 0                         |
|          | Cheapyng-gavel, -                                    | . 0           | 12       | 11                        |
|          | Perquisites of Courts, -                             | 2             | 17       | 2                         |
|          | Bailiwick of the Liberty, -                          | - 1           | 2        | 0                         |
|          | Perquisites of its Courts,                           | 0             | 9        | 10                        |
|          | Sussex.                                              |               |          |                           |
|          | Duddlesford manor,                                   | - 0           | 12       | 9                         |
|          | Warwickshire.                                        |               |          |                           |
|          |                                                      | 73            | 10       | 0                         |
|          | Rowington manor and rectory,                         | 19            | 10       | V                         |
|          | Wilts.                                               | 01            | 10       | _                         |
|          | Manor of Whitesbury,                                 | 21            | 19       | 8                         |
|          | Kent.                                                |               |          |                           |
|          | Manor of Windhull,                                   | 38            | . 0      | 0                         |
|          | Oxon.                                                |               |          |                           |
|          | Stanton-Harcourt rectory,                            | 30            | 0        | 0                         |
|          | Lands in Sewell,                                     | 6             | 0        | 0                         |
|          | London.                                              |               |          |                           |
|          | Divers tenements, particularly one called Redyng     | r             |          |                           |
|          | place, in the parish of St. Andrew, near Baynar      |               |          |                           |
|          | Castle, reserved to the use of the abbot,            | - 5           | 0        | 0                         |
|          | umina,                                               | 12            | 0        | 0                         |
|          | Herts.                                               |               |          |                           |
|          | Sebrightford manor,                                  | 6             | 2        | O.I.                      |
|          | Aston manor,*                                        |               | 19       | $0\frac{1}{2}$            |
|          | ·                                                    | 36            | 19       | $11\frac{1}{4}$           |
|          | Bedfordshire.                                        |               |          |                           |
|          | Houghton manor,                                      | 10            | 15       | Н                         |
|          | Small rents collected by the bailiff, or out-steward |               |          |                           |
|          | in Tyglehurst and other places,                      | 5             | 13       | 10                        |
|          | Carried forward -                                    | <b>£</b> 1192 | 4        | 21/2                      |
|          |                                                      |               |          | 14.2                      |

<sup>\*</sup> King Stephen, by his charter, granted or rendered to Robert earl of Leicester, and his heirs, the burgh of Hereford, and the castle there, and the whole county of Herefordscyre, to hold by hereditary right; except the lands belonging to the bishoprick, to the abbey of Reading, and to other churches and abbeys which held of the king in capite.—Madox's History of the Exchequer, p. 635.

|                                                      |            | I.    | ۶. | d.  |
|------------------------------------------------------|------------|-------|----|-----|
| Brought over -                                       | · d        | £1192 | 4  | 21  |
| Pastures and Meadow                                  | 8.         |       |    |     |
| Cowick,                                              | -          | 4     | 13 | 4   |
| Estmede, near the road to Caversham,                 | -          | 8     | 0  | 0   |
| Three fields called Crown-field, Burfield, a         | and the    |       |    |     |
| Grove and lands called Spittlefields,                | -          | 6     | 8  | 4   |
| An inn in Reading called the Crown,                  | -          | 3     | 6  | 8   |
| Tanner's mead,                                       | _          | 1     | 10 | 0   |
| Meadows in Battel,                                   | -          | 2     | 10 | 0   |
| Meadows in Sulhamsted,                               | _          | 1     | 0  | 0   |
| A tenement called the Hind's-head, -                 | _          | 1     | 6  | 8   |
| Tithes of Mote-hall in Tyglehurst, -                 | _          | 7     | 0  | 0   |
| Tithes of West-wood-row, in the same,                | -          | 1     | 6  | 8   |
| Tithes in Northcot,                                  | -          | 2     | 2  | 0   |
| Cithes in Whitley,                                   | _          | 0     | 6  | 8   |
| Cithes of a meadow near Reading called Fron          | emarsh.    | 0     | 8  | 0   |
| ithes of Cowick,                                     | ,          | 1     | 3  | 4   |
| Possessions of the office of A                       | Imoner.    |       |    | _   |
| ents of assize in Reading,                           | m          | 6     | 1  | 0   |
| ustomary rents there,                                | ~          | 23    | 15 | 4   |
| Ianor of Burghfield, -                               |            | 15    | 0  | 0   |
| ension from the vicar of St. Lawrence's in I         | Reading.   | 5     | 0  | 0   |
| Possessions of the office of C                       | -          |       |    |     |
| ents of assize in Reading, -                         | _          | 0     | 7  | 5   |
| ustomary rents,                                      | _          | 0     | 13 | 4   |
| ents of assize in Sheffield, Calcot, Wokefield       | . Caver-   |       |    | _   |
| sham, and Cold-Norton, -                             | -          | 13    | 8  | 111 |
| ustomary rents in the same,                          | 49         | 7     | 18 | 2   |
| sheepcote and lands in Sewell, and Little            | Γew. in    |       |    |     |
| Oxfordshire,                                         | . =        | 6     | 0  | 0   |
| ension from the abbot of St. Augustin, in B          |            | 13    | 6  | 8   |
| Belonging to the office of S                         |            |       |    |     |
| ents of assize in Reading, -                         |            | -1    | 7  | 6   |
|                                                      |            | 4     | 16 | 0   |
| ustomary rents there,  Pensions from the following C | hurches    | •     |    |     |
|                                                      | -          | 2     | 0  | 0   |
| st. Giles's, Reading,                                |            | 2     | 0  | 0   |
| st. Mary's,                                          | •          |       |    |     |
| Carried forward -                                    | <b>£</b> ] | 335   | 0  | 3   |
|                                                      |            |       |    |     |

| CHAP. | Warnalit awar                         |           |           |        | £1      | <i>t</i> .<br>335 | s.<br>0 | d.<br>3        |
|-------|---------------------------------------|-----------|-----------|--------|---------|-------------------|---------|----------------|
| XIII. | Brought over                          |           | •         |        | الل     | 2                 | 0       | 0              |
|       | Sulhamsted rectory, -                 |           |           |        | _       | 0                 | 13      | 4              |
|       | Englefield rectory, -                 |           |           |        |         | 0                 | 8       | o              |
|       | Compton vicarage,                     |           | _         |        | _       | 1                 | 10      | 0              |
|       | Hanborough rectory, -                 | _         |           |        |         | Ô                 | 4       | 0              |
|       | <i>V</i> -                            | _         |           |        |         | 0                 | 2       | 0              |
|       | Purley rectory, -                     |           |           | _      |         | 0                 | 1       | 0              |
|       | Beenham vicarage,                     |           | _         | _      | _       | 1                 | 12      | 8              |
|       | Pangbourn rectory, -                  |           | _         |        | -       | 1                 | 0       | 0              |
|       | Wargrave vicarage,                    | +1.0      | Dafaat.   | -      |         | •                 | U       | 0              |
|       | Belonging to                          | ine i     | nejeci    | ory.   |         | 0                 | 9       | 8              |
|       | Rent of assize in Reading,            | -         |           | ~      |         | 0                 | 10      | 0              |
|       | Customary rents there,                | o est o o | -<br>- C- | . T    | -       | U                 | 10      | U              |
|       | Belonging to the                      | oyice     | மு கா     | w-pr   | 107.    | 0                 | 3       | 4 .            |
|       | Rents of assize,                      | -         |           | -      |         | 0                 | 18      | 0              |
|       | In Blewbury,                          |           | -         |        | -       | 0                 | 13      | 4              |
|       | In Sheepbridge,                       | -         |           | •      |         | 0                 | 13      | 4              |
|       | A building in the Market-place,       |           | -         |        | -       | 5                 | 18      | 0              |
|       | Rents of tenants, copy-holders,       | - es      | of Co     |        | ~~~     | 9                 | 10      | U              |
|       | Belonging to the                      | одисе     | 03 61     | anei   | ату.    | 0                 | 10      | 10             |
|       | Rents of assize,                      |           | ~         |        | -       | 11                | 10      |                |
|       | Customary rents, -                    | · · ·     | of III's  | - J.C. | I Jan   | 11                | 11      | 4              |
|       | Belonging to the o                    | упсе в    | oj wo     | oajoi  | iaer.   |                   | 2       | 0              |
|       | Rents of assize, -                    | -         |           | -      |         | 0                 | 5       | 0              |
|       | Customary rents, -                    | . 6 17    | · T/?     | 70     | -<br>/- | 13                | 6       | 4              |
|       | Belonging to the keeper of the chapel | of tn     | e virg    | ;in J  | aary    |                   | 1.0     | 0.1            |
|       | Rents of assize,                      | -         |           | -      |         | 0                 | 16      | $3\frac{1}{2}$ |
|       | In Burgfield,                         |           | •         |        | -       | 0                 | 3       | 0              |
|       | In Tilehurst, -                       | -         |           | ~      |         | 0                 | 0       | 6              |
|       | Customary in Reading,                 |           | -         |        | -       | 12                | 10      | 8              |
|       |                                       |           |           |        |         | 1391              | 0       | 101            |
|       | From the priory of Leominster,        |           | _         |        | -       | 480               | 0       | 0              |
|       | Reserved annuities to the monks,      | -         |           | -      |         | 59                | 13      | 4              |
|       | Pensions to the abbots from recto     | ries,     | -         |        | -       | 87                | 12      | 1              |
|       |                                       |           | nn .      | ,      | _       | 0010              |         |                |
|       |                                       |           | Tota      | .1     | £       | 2018              | 6       | $3\frac{1}{2}$ |

At the dissolution, it was valued at £2116 3s. 9d.1

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> Leland.

This revenue, supposing the number of the monks to have been always complete, would have allowed for their maintenance, on an average, ten pounds per man, which, according to the present value of money, must have been equa to fifty pounds, a sum more than sufficient, after deducting the pensions payable to the abbot, for men, who had renounced the luxuries of the world, to spend their days in meditation and prayer.

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From the savings of their revenue, however, after the payment of their annual expenses, they were at times enabled to assist their sovereigns with money in their exigences, either by way of gifts or loans, many instances of which are on record; but they were not always equally accommodating, for when Henry III. imposed on them the maintaining of two Jewish converts, both women, they so far resented it, that when he afterwards required a loan of five thousand marks, to enable him to pay the portion he had promised on the marriage of his niece, the daughter of Grey, earl of Angoulesme, with the young earl of Gloucester, they refused to comply, alleging their inability to advance such a large sum, and the impossibility of justifying it, if they did. But Edward III, who was more respected, borrowed at different times large sums of money of the abbey, as well as jewels and other valuables.

The monks of Reading were not behind the rest of the catholic clergy in their superstitious reverence for relics; in this respect indeed, the abbey might have been considered the general repository of the nation; so numerous were the relics confided to their care, that the inventory of them, is said to have filled four sheets of paper; among these, the most remarkable were, the wing of the angel, who brought over the point of the spear, that pierced Jesus Christ; as many pieces of the cross whereon Jesus Christ suffered, as would have been sufficient to have made one of a large size; but what they placed the greatest value upon, was the hand of St. James, to which the greatest reverence was ordered to be paid by a particular charter. William of Malmsbury says, that Henry, from joy at having got possession of the hand of St. James the apostle, founded the abbey in 1126,\* and besides endowing it with many good things, placed in it the hand of the blessed apostle; but Matthew Paris says, this circumstance did not take place till 1133, and that after the king's death, it was taken away by the bishop of Winchester, but the monks

According to Hovedure, this famous relic was presented to Henry by the empress Matilda, his daughter, after the abbey was built, and consequently could not have been the occasion of this endowment.

<sup>\*</sup> Rex vero anglorum Henricus, præ gaudio manus beati Jacobi apostoli, allata ad eum per Matildem emperatricem, filiam suam, fundavit nobilem abbatium de Redinges, et eam bonis multis ditavit, et in ea manum beati Jacobi apostoli posuit (regis 26).—Roger Hovedune.

expressing great dissatisfaction on their being deprived of so valuable a relic, he was soon after obliged to restore it.\*

The arms of the abbey were azure, three scallop shells, or.

These arms are said to have been described on the scutcheons on the left side of the west door of St. Lawrence's church; but having, from time, been nearly obliterated, they have lately been renewed. This door way was probably brought from the abbey, which supplied a great part of the materials both for that, and St. Mary's church.

Their common seal had, on one side, the figure of the Virgin Mary between St. James and St. John, and, on the reverse, that of the founder, Henry I. sitting with a sceptre in his right hand, and a representation of the monastery in his left, between St. Peter and St. Paul; the figures were in three separate compartments, with gothic ornaments.

While the abbey continued in its pristine state, it became the burial-place of several royal and noble persons; among whom, may be reckoned the royal founder himself, who dving at Rouen in Normandy, on the first of December 1135, was brought over to England, and conveyed, in great funeral pomp, to this his favorite establishment, attended by Stephen earl of Blois, afterward king, William earl of Warren, and four other earls, the archbishops of Canterbury and York, the bishops, and most of the nobility, and was solemnly interred in the abbey church. The body had been previously embalmed, according to the custom of the times, in a very rude manner; the heart, eyes, tongue, brains, and bowels, being first extracted, were deposited, in a handsome monument erected before the altar of the ancient church of Notre Dame de Près otherwise de Bonnes Nouvelles, at Rouen, founded in the year 1060, and destroyed during the siege of that city in 1592. After the bowels were taken out, the body was salted, and wrapped in a tanned hide, and was then placed in the coffin wherein it was conveyed to England. A beautiful monument was afterwards erected to his memory, in the abbey church, on which was the king's effigy as large as life, with the usual emblems of royalty; and when Richard II. in the fourteenth century, renewed the abbey charter, it was

<sup>\*</sup> Some few years since, some persons employed among the ruins of the abbey, found a human hand, rather small, the fleshy parts were dry and withered, but in perfect preservation; the persons who found it, disposed of it to the late Mr. Savage, an eminent surgeon of this town, on whose decease it came into the possession of Mr. Osborn, his successor.

<sup>† &</sup>quot;Scallop shells, which may fitly for the workmanship thereof, be called artificium naturæ. It seemeth pilgrims carried them, as Diogenes did his dish, to drink out of."—Fuller's Holy Warre.

<sup>‡</sup> Cadaver regis apud Radingum in ecclesiæ, quam ipse fundaverat, regaliter est sepultum, præsentibus, archiepiscopis, episcopis, et magistratibus regni.—Matthew Paris.

on the condition that the abbot should repair the tomb and image of the founder, at the expense of the monastery, within the space of one year; so, much care was then taken for its preservation, but soon after the dissolution, this beautiful monument which had been hitherto preserved by succeeding monarchs, and the gratitude of the monks, was permitted to be destroyed by the reformers, who, in their unbridled zeal for religion, were unwilling any monument should remain, however elegant in its form, or venerable for its antiquity, that was in any respect connected with, or described any of the emblems they were pleased to term the superstition of the Romish church. But, zeal, however violent its influence on the mind of its possessor may be. is not always free from the operations of other passions, particularly avarice; this is often the secret cause of actions, we are too apt to flatter ourselves arise from more meritorious motives; to this therefore, in addition to religious enthusiasm, may be imputed the destruction of so many works of art, that accompanied the reformation of religion in this kingdom, and among these may be reckoned this venerable tomb of Henry, which, if considered only as a specimen of the arts in the twelfth century, ought to have been preserved

A tradition is current among the inhabitants, that Henry was buried in a silver coffin; an opinion that must have prevailed at the time of the reformation, and was probably one of the motives that prompted them, after having demolished the superstructure, to violate the repose of the grave, and to scatter abroad the ashes of this once mighty monarch. This circumstance seems alluded to in the following passage of Leland's Cantio Cigni, quoted by Camden:

from the destructive rage of an ignorant populace.

Hæccine sed pietas! heu, dira piacula, primum Neustrius Henricus, situs hîc inglorius urnâ, Nunc jacet ejectus, tumulum novus advena quærit Frustra, nam regi tenues invidet arenas, Auri sacra fames.

On digging the foundations for the county gaol, in the year 1785, on a spot a small distance from the east end of the abbey church, the workmen discovered a leaden coffin, of a peculiar form, having a separate division for the head, and the lid composed of two pieces separated longitudinally.\* From the form of the coffin, there could be no doubt but it was the workmanship

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<sup>\*</sup> This coffin was sold to Mr. Moore, a plumber of this town, but the workmen had previously reduced it into a rude unshaped mass, for the conveniency of carriage, so that it was difficult to ascertain its real form.

CHAP. of a very early period, and therefore many considered it to have been that in which the royal founder was interred: this opinion was considerably strengthened by there having been found in it a strip of tanned leather, and a small bit of brass;\* the former was ingeniously supposed to have been the remains of the hide wherein the corpse of Henry had been wrapped; but this alone is too slender a foundation, to prove the identity of the person, whom I am rather inclined to think was either one of the earliest abbots, or some other religious person belonging to the monastery, who, according to the custom of the times had been buried in his usual dress, and the small strip of leather with the piece of brass annexed, might be nothing more than the remains of a sandal, with the clasp to confine it to the foot. That it could not however have been the remains of Henry, is placed beyond all doubt, because he is expressly said to have been entombed in the church, and most probably before the altar; t but this coffin was found considerably to the eastward of the church, in a part where many other remains of bodies were discovered, and which could be no other than the common burial ground to the monastery.

> Adeliza, Henry's second wife, was interred here, and probably in the same vault; but it is uncertain whether Matilda, his former queen, was not interred in some other place, she having died before the church was completed.

> Adeliza's effigy was placed by the side of Henry's, both crowned and veiled, because she had been a queen and a professed nun. She was daughter of Godfrey of Louvaine, duke of Brabant, a descendant from Charlemagne, emperor of France; and sister to Joceline of Louvaigne, ancestor of the family of the Percys, dukes of Northumberland. After Henry's death, she married William D'Aubeny, created earl of Arundel by the empress Matilda, daughter of Henry, who was also supposed to have been buried here, but this is uncertain, as some writers assert that she was interred at Bec, in Normandy.1

The empress Maud, or Matilda, was the daughter of a king, the wife

<sup>\*</sup> Mr. Coates says that a perfect skeleton was found in it; but I am very doubtful of the fact, not having heard of it before; and the length of time it must have lain in the ground previous to its discovery, seems a convincing proof of the impossibility of such a report being true, unless the body had been embalmed in a more perfect manner. True it is, a perfect skeleton was pretended to have been found in one of the graves by the workmen, which probably gave rise to the report, but in fact this was nothing more than the scattered remains of different bodies put together so as to form a whole skeleton; this was shewn to the curious for a penny each—the sole motive for this rude exercise

<sup>+</sup> Corpus Henrici itaque Radingas delatum cum honore debito in ipsa ecclesia ante altare sepultum est .- Gervase of Canterbury.

Ashmole.

of a king, and the mother of a king; on which account, the following distich was inscribed on her tomb:

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Ortu magna, viro major, sed maxima partu, Hic jacet, Henrici filia, sponsa, parens.

The last of the royal family buried here was prince William, eldest son of Henry II, and grandson of Henry I, at whose feet his remains were deposited, under a costly monument erected to his memory.

Among the nobility interred in the abbey church may be reckoned Constance, eldest daughter of Edmund de Langley, duke of York, son of Edward III. Ann countess of Warwick. A son and daughter of Richard earl of Cornwall king of the Romans, and brother of Henry III. This prince was one of the witnesses to the charter granted by the last mentioned monarch to the corporation. Reginald de Curtenea earl of Cornwall, natural son of Henry II, was interred here 1175.\* There were doubtless many more interred here, as well clergy as laity, whose memories have perished, together with those frail monuments intended to hand down their names and their honors to posterity, whose number we can now only conceive from the contemplation of similar places of religious worship, that have been more favored in their duration. From these, the imagination may trace some faint ideas of this once venerable fabric: its elevated but fantastic roof, its gothic windows adorned with paintings of the prophets and apostles, its beautiful altars, its crucifixes and their attendant saints, its floor inlaid with monumental inscriptions, and the solemn gloom of the nave and side aisles crowded with cenotaphs of departed heros. While the imagination is feasting on the imaginary scene, we awake, as from a trance, with additional regret that so grand a structure was not permitted to remain to the present day, and that the destruction should have been so perfect as to have left only a few massive ruins to point out where it once stood.

Two councils were held in the abbey; one in the reign of king John, summoned by order of pope Innocent III. At this council, the abbot of Reading was appointed the pope's legate, to promulgate the sentence of excommunication against the barons, at that time at war with the king. The other was held here by archbishop Peckham, in the reign of Edward I; which has been mentioned in a former part of this work.

Mr. Grose, from Brown Willis's Notitia, says, the councils and parliaments were held in the refectory, which he adds, was eighty-four feet long by

<sup>\*</sup> Hoveden says, he was uncle to the king, and that dying at Chertsey he was buried in the abbey church here, with every honor due to his exalted rank.

CHAP. forty-eight wide; but, according to sir Henry Englefield, the refectory was XIII., only seventy-two feet long by thirty-two wide; this therefore could not have been the place of assembly. It is more probable that it was the great hall which was used for this purpose, that being the only room answering to the dimensions given by Brown Willis.

The following bishops were consecrated in the abbey church: Joceline de Wells, bishop of Bath and Wells, in 1206. William de Cornhill, bishop of Coventry and Litchfield, in the year 1215. Robert Grostete, bishop of Lincoln, and Hugh, bishop of St. Asaphs, in 1235. Roger, bishop of Bath and Wells, in 1244, and Richard Blondy, bishop of Exeter, in 1245.

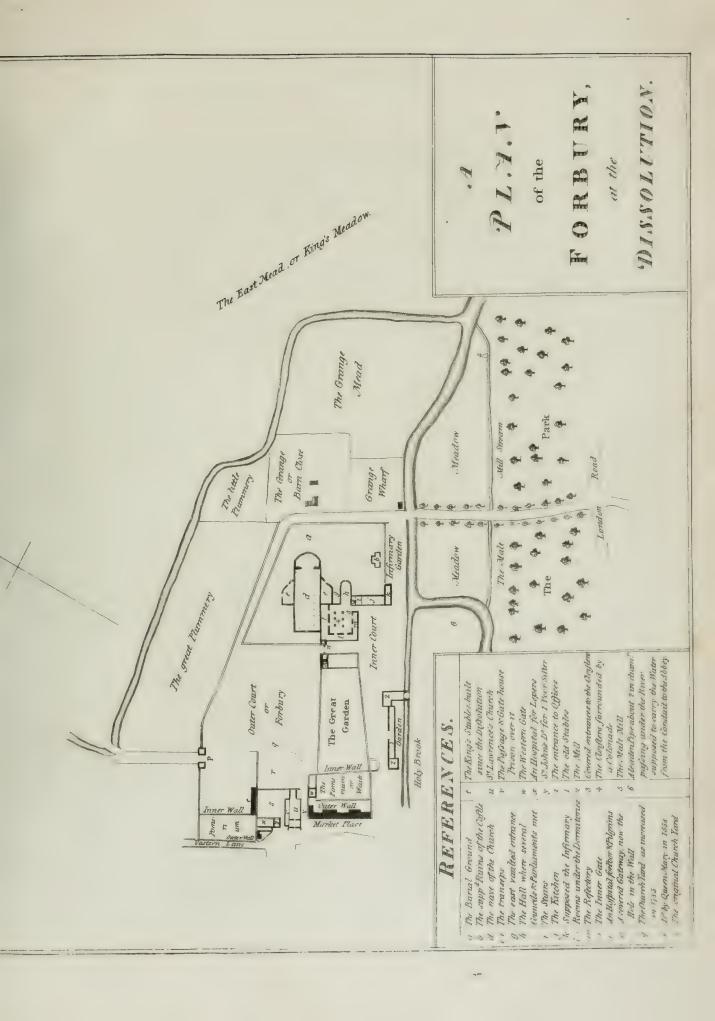
After the dissolution, the abbey reverted to the crown, and became the occasional residence of the succeeding monarchs, 'till the troubles that arose in the reign of Charles I. reduced it nearly to its present state of dilapidation.

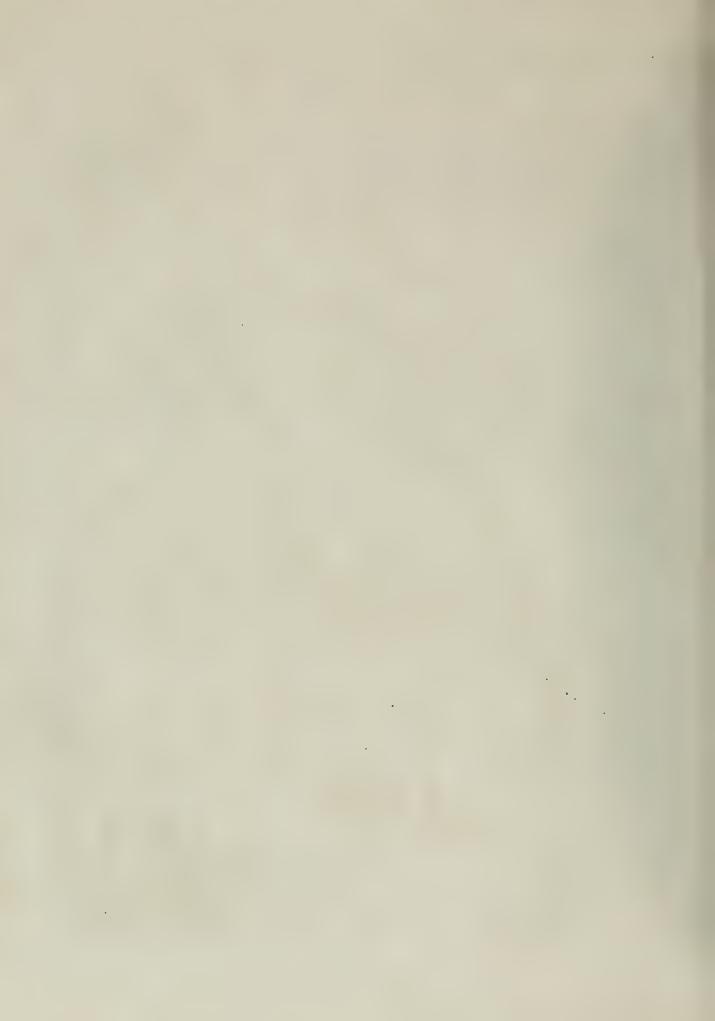
Camden calls it "a royal seat, with fair stables and princely and most generous steeds." These stables, according to Speed's map, were at the back of the Saracen's-head-yard, just within the gate leading to the inner court, part of which are still standing. On the north side of St. Lawrence's churchyard, was the great barn; now occupied by Mr. Street.

James I. appointed a keeper of the house, with a salary of twenty pounds per annum, and a keeper of the stables, at twelve pounds thirteen shillings and four pence. Before this period, most of the possessions belonging to the abbey had been disposed of by the crown, either by gift or purchase to different persons, but the greater part of the houses and land in the town was purchased by Mr. William Grey, a citizen of London, whose widow afterwards marrying John Blagrave, esq. the estates came into that family.

The site of the abbey, with the adjoining lands and fisheries, was let in the reign of Charles II. on lease for a certain number of years, at a low rent and fine uncertain. This lease was afterwards purchased by Messrs. Blagrave and Vansittart, who still hold them under the crown. At the renewal of the lease, in 1780, to John Blagrave, and Henry Vansittart, esqrs. for twenty one years, the fine paid was 1500l. and the reserved rent payable to the crown. was increased to forty-four pounds thirteen shillings and two pence halfpenny per annum; the whole had been previously valued at three hundred and fiftyseven pounds five shillings and nine pence per annum.

These lands are let to under-tenants at increased rents, but the profits to the crown would be considerably augmented, and the advantages to be derived to the town incalculable, were the parts more immediately connected with the town, particularly those on the banks of the river, disposed of in. small lots to the inhabitants.





The state of the abbey, after its final ruin at the end of the civil wars. may be conjectured from the following survey, made by order of parliament, XIII. in 1650, by commissioners appointed for that purpose.

"Reading abbey. All that capital messuage, mansion-house or abbeyhouse, with the appurtenances, called Reading abbey, consisting of two sellars, two butteries, a hall, a parlour, a dining-room, ten chambers, a garret with a large gallery, and other small roomes, with two court yards, and a large gatehouse, with several rooms adjoining to the said house, and a small gardine, with an old small house, built with stone, thereto adjoining, and a stable with sellars over the same, and a small tenement in the south end of the said stable, with a little gardine, and a dove-house, which said abbey, with the site thereof, is in the occupation of Mr. Richard Knollys, and is bounded with the court called the Forbury north and east, Pond-haies south, and the great gardine west, in all by measurement two acres, value per annum fifteen pounds.

"There is on the east side of the said mansion house a great old hall, with a very large sellar under the said hall, arched, with some other decayed rooms, between the said hall, and the mansion-house, with the ruins of an old large chapel, a kitchen, and several other rooms, fit to be demolished; the materials valued at two hundred pounds.

"The ground on which the ruin stands, is by estimation eight acres and a half, valued at eight pounds two shillings.

"Pond-haies alias West-haies, a small tenement in occupation of Henry Aires, per annum sixteen shillings. Brown's messuage ten pounds.

"Fermary gardine, a messuage, tenement, malt-house, garden, and orchard, so called, bounded with the river Kennet, south, and butting upon the way leading from the Forbury to Orte-bridge; one acre ten poles, per annum fourteen pounds.

"A small tenement, bounded with the great gardine north, and butting upon the dove-house west, twenty pearches, per annum fifty shillings.

"A large barn, formerly a stable, in length 137 feet, in breadth 30 feet, with a great yard and small gardine, bounded by the Hollow-brook south, and the said great gardine north, and all that granary standing over the said Hollow-brook butting upon the said gardine called West-haics alias Pondhaies south, in the occupation of Mr. Sharp, per annum six pounds ten shillings.

" All that gardine or orchard, called by the name of the great gardine, one acre, in occupation of James Cannon, bounded by the said Forbury north, and said great yard south, one acre three roods, the said three roods lying now waste, by reason of the fortification, per annum eight pounds.

"The porter's lodge, at the west gate entering into the said Forbury,

Силр. ХІП. consisting of a sellar, a hall, a buttery, three chambers, three garrets, a small yard, and gardine, with an out-house, in the occupation of William Newton, bounded with the Forbury north, and butting upon a prison called the Compter west, containing twenty pearches, per annum three pounds. The said tenement is claimed by Richard Evans, alledged by will of sir Francis Knollys, knight, deceased, but nothing produced to make it appear.

"All that messuage or tenement, with a wood wharf thereto adjoining, called the Grange-wharf, in the occupation of John Blake, situate and being by the Orte-bridge; consisting of two sellars, a kitchen, a hall, a parlour, and three chambers, with a stable and store-house, bounded with the said Kennet, south; and a close called the Grange-close, north; butting upon the way leading from the Orte-bridge to the Forbury west, and upon a meadow called the Grange-mead, east; containing by estimation one acre and half, value per annum sixteen pounds.

"All that piece or parcell of meadow ground in the occupation of James Cannon, bounded with the same Kennet north, the said Orte south, and butting upon Orte-lane west, containing by estimation six acres, value per annum fifteen pounds.

"All those two small tenements, with three pieces or parcels of meadow ground, now lying in one, in the occupation of John Tirrell, bounded with the said Kennet north and west, the Town Ortes south, and butting upon the said Orte-lane east, containing by estimation five acres two roods, value per annum sixteen pounds.

"All that piece or parcell of ground called by the name of Shipton-mead, alias the Grange-mead, in the occupation of Matthew Turner, bounded with the said Kennet south, and East-mead alias King's-mead north and east, and butting upon Grange-close, and the said Grange-wharf, containing by estimation eight acres, value per annum eighteen pounds.

"All that piece or parcel of pasture ground, called by the name of Grange-close, in the said Matthew Turner's occupation, bounded with the Little Plummery, and the said East-meadow north, the said Grange-wharf south, and butting upon the said Shipton-mead east, and the way leading from the Orte-bridge to the Forbury west, containing by estimation four acres and a half, value per annum eight pounds.

"All that piece or parcell of meadow ground called the Little Plummery, in the said Turner's occupation, bounded with the said East-meadow north, the said Grange-close south, butting west upon the Great Plummery, and east upon the said meadow, containing by estimation one acre and a half, value per annum three pounds.

"All that piece or parcel of meadow ground called the Great Plummery, in the said James Cannon's occupation, bounded with the said East-meadow north, and the said Forbury south, and butting upon the said Little Plummery east, containing by estimation ten acres, value per annum twenty-two pounds.

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"All that fishing and fishing place, in the river Thames, called the Pool under the lock, in Reading: all that fishing and fishing place in the water of Thames aforesaid: and all that fishing place in the water at Cavershambridge; which said fishing extends from Battel-mead, on the west side of the said Caversham-bridge, to about four score yards below the said lock, and are now in the occupation of John Salter, which we value at per annum two pounds five shillings.

"All that fishing and fishing place of the water of Kennet, extending itself from Giles'-mill in the borough of Reading, to the river Thames: and all that fishing place in the water called Graunte's brook alias Gunter's-brook, per annum forty-two shillings.

"Memorandum: All the aforesaid premisses, except the said abbey, with the scite thereof, and the grange, with the said several houses and orchards and gardines, were, by letters patent of the late queen Elizabeth, granted to Bartholomew Fowke, esq. bearing date the one and thirtieth day of August, in the four and thirtieth year of her reign, for the term of fifty years, commencing from the feast of St. Michael the archangel, which should be in the year 1616, under the yearly rent of twelve pounds fourteen shillings, to be paid half yearly, as appears by an indenture of assignment made between the said Bartholomew Fowke on the one part, and sir John Stanhope, kt. on the other part, by virtue of which the said premisses were invested in the said sir John Stanhope, and were afterwards, viz. on the two and twentieth day of February, in the first year of the late king James, assigned and set over to sir Francis Knollys, kt. by the said sir John Stanhope. But the said premisses are worth over and above the said rent per annum, four score and eleven pounds and thirteen shillings.

"There will be sixteen years to come in the said grant on the feast of St. Michael the arch-angel, next ensuing.

"Memorandum. There is belonging to the said abbey one court walled round, called by the name of the Forbury, bounded with the Great Plummery north, the Grange east, and the great gardine and scite south, and butting upon the town of Reading west, in which the town doth yearly keep four faires, and doth now lye common, and through which there are several ways, as passages, into and out of King's-mead, into the great barn, stable, and lodgings there, and other ways, which said court contains by admeasurement

XIII.

seven acres and twenty perches, which we value, for the reasons aforesaid, to be worth per annum but twenty shillings.\*

" All the said several premisses, and every part and parcel thereof, are

tythe free, as having never been charged therewith."1

The following original papers respecting the abbey are preserved in the record office in the Exchequer:

Carta regis Abbati de Radynge de libertatibus. Trinitatis Recorda 17 Edward III. Rotulo.

Carta Abbati de Radynge pro Terris in comitatibus Berksiræ, et Herefordiæ, irrotulata, Trinitatis Recorda 20° Edward III. Rotulo.

Carta regis Abbati de Radynge, Paschæ Recorda 20 Edward III. Rotulo.

Carta regis Abbati de Radynge in comitatu Berksiræ facta Hillarii Recorda 5 Richard II. Rotulo. Remem. regis.

Confirmatio Cartarum de libertatibus Abbati de Radynge Comitatu Berksiræ concessa. Michaelis Recorda. Ist Henry Vth. Rotulo 11.

Carta regis de confirmatione libertatum Abbati et Conventui de Radynge. Michaelis Recorda. 1st Henry VI. Rotulo 10.

Carta regis de confirmatione de libertatibus Abbati et Conventui B.

Mariæ de Radynge facta. Hillarii Recorda S Henry VI. Rotulo 1.

Carta regis de confirmatione libertatum Abbati de Radynge facta. Hillarii Recorda 8 Henry VIth. Rotulo 4 vel 21.

Carta regis Abbati de Radynge de libertatibus facta. Paschæ Recorda 18 Henrici VI. Rotulo 7.

Carta confirmationis privilegiorum Abbatis et Conventus de Radynge in Comitatu Berksiræ. Hillarii Recorda 3 Edward VI. Rotulo. 10.

Finis solutus per Abbatem et Conventum de Redynge pro confirmatione libertatum. Originalia 2 Henry VIII. Rotulo 57.

Carta regis de libertatibus concessa monasterio de Reding Abbati et Monachis per Henricum filium regis Wilhelmi irrotulata Michaelis Recorda 13 Henry VIII. Rotulo 23.

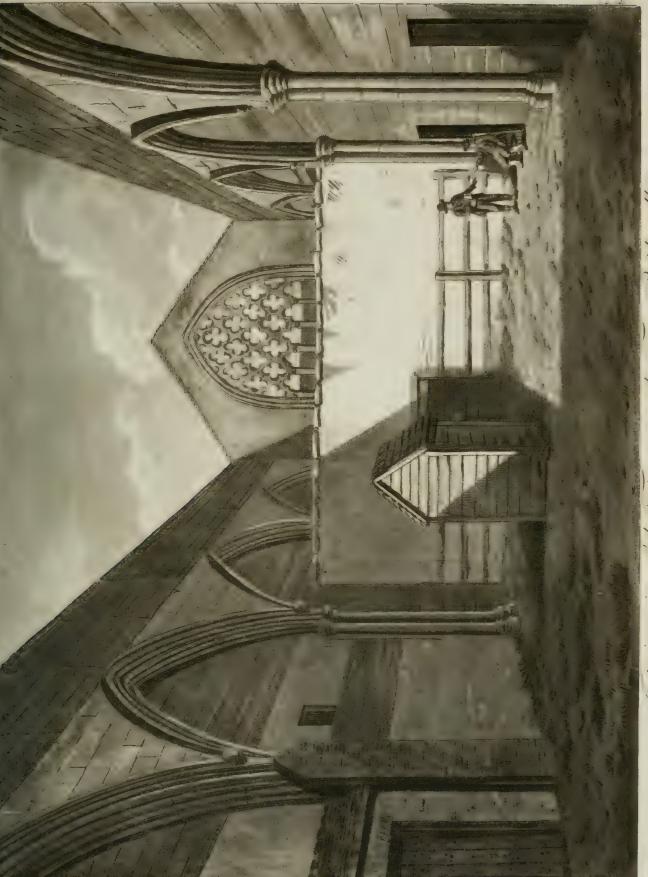
Carta regis de libertatibus Abbati et Conventui de Redinge concessa. Paschæ Recorda 18 Henry VIII. Rotulo 7 et 1. pars originalis 34. Henry VIII. Rotulo 75.

The Leiger Book of the monastery is said to be in the Harleyan library.2

<sup>•</sup> From the low rate of the annual value of the Forbury, and the mention here made of the fairs held in it, as well as the passages leading through it, there can be no doubt but that the commissioners considered this part as common, or at least very different from the other portions, on which they seem to have set their full value.

Mr. Coates's History.

Nicholson's Historical Library.



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# Religious Foundations.

CHAPTER XIV.

#### THE FRIARY.

THE monastery for the franciscans, or fratres minores, in Reading was CHAP. built about the middle of the thirteenth century, at which time they first appeared in this country. Having obtained the pope's permission to settle here, they applied to the abbot and monks for a piece of ground to build their convent on, who, after some hesitation, granted them a marshy piece of ground adjoining the Caversham-road; but this being afterwards found subject to floods, they were prevailed on, after much solicitation, in 1285, to permit them to build on the present site, on condition they did not acquire any other property, or solicit any donations; but they were at liberty to accept what was gratuitously offered them; and among other restrictions, they were not permitted to bury in their church, or cemetery, the bodies of any of the parishioners of the abbey, or of any of the churches belonging to it. With this permission, they set about building their convent, aided by the gift of Robert de Lacey, of fifty-six oaks, out of his wood of Ashbridge.

"The order of regular priests, (says a modern author") in the Roman catholic countries, that is, of such as had taken the vows of perpetual poverty and chastity, are usually distributed under two heads: those of monks and friars. The great basis of distinction between these two classes, as derived from the principles of their original institutions, was, that the monks were forbidden to possess any private property, but had all things in common, while the friars abjured the possession of all property, whether private or in common. The monks, therefore, soon came to possess, from the donations and bequests of the pious, immense revenues. They inhabited stately buildings, the very ruins of which, in the eyes of the man who loves to transport himself into the times of old, are still among the ornaments of the lands in which they lived.

"Augustine, who first undertook the conversion of our Saxon progenitors to the christian faith, was a benedictine monk; all the abbeys in England, previously to the Norman conquest, were filled with the votaries of this order, and down to the reformation, all the mitred parliamentary abbots of England, were benedictines. The friars, through all their denominations and divisions, were universally mendicants.

"The characters of the monastic orders no sooner appeared to be on the vane, than a new race of men sprung up in the persons of the friars, who speedily engrossed as much reputation, and were every where held in as great honor and esteem, as the monks had been, in the days of their greatest purity. The friars had no magnificent palaces, like the monks; no thrones, no painted windows, and stately architecture; they were, for the most part, wanderers on the face of the earth. In these respects, they professed to act on the model of Christ, and his apostles, 'to take no thought for to-morrow,' 'to have no place where to lay their heads,' and to be indebted for the necessaries of existence to the spontaneous affection and kindness of the people, whose neighborhood they charced to frequent. They freely imparted to the profane laity their spiritual gifts; and, in return, received from them those slender attentions and donations which might enable them to support life.

"They exercised the occupation of beggars; and they undertook peremptorily to maintain in their sermons, that Jesus Christ and his disciples demanded and subsisted upon the alms of their countrymen.

"Though beggars and wanderers on the earth, they determined to exhibit in their lives every proof of the most indefatigable industry. 'The lazy monk' had become a term of general disapprobation and obloquy. They resolved to be, in all respects, the reverse of the monks. They did not hide within cloistered walls, and withdraw themselves from the inspection and comments of mankind. They were always before the public, and were constantly employed in the pious offices of counsel, comfort, admonition, preaching and prayer. In pursuit of these objects, they spared no fatigue, they hastened from place to place, and when their frames might be expected to be worn out, with the length of the way, they were still fresh and alert, without repose, and almost without aliment, for all the offices of disinterested toil and christian instruction, and all the duties of men incessantly watchful for the salvation of their fellow creatures. This was their labor, their study, their refreshment and their joy."

Such is the character of these mendicants, and such we find them to have been at this place, without any earthly possessions, and without those conveniences and luxuries so observable in the abbey. There all was on a great seale, their buildings magnificent, their possessions extensive, their conveniences adapted to all their wants, and their mode of living not merely confined to the necessities, but indulging in all the luxuries of life; on the contrary, the building appropriated to the friars, was on a small scale, such as they might be supposed capable of erecting from the eleemosynary gifts of the people, from whom alone they must also have derived their humble maintenance, as at the dissolution no return was made of any property they possessed except the friary, and its appertenances, which did not exceed seven acres of land.

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We have no account of the building, nor of the number of the friars who resided in it; but to judge, from the small extent of the ground it occupied, and its appearance in Speed's map of the town, it was neither roomy nor elegant. Content with the meanest accommodations for themselves, their principal care seems to have been to erect a house of prayer suitable to the religion they professed, which, from its being more substantially built, is the only part of their possessions that has withstood the injuries of time. This structure was principally composed of flints, put together with so much precision as almost to appear one solid mass, and is, beyond a doubt, one of the completest works of the kind now existing.

This building consisted of the nave, side aisles, and chancel; the latter has been destroyed many years, but the former remain nearly in their original state. The aisles are separated from the body of the church by lancet pointed arches, springing from six clustered stone columns, with circular capitals, extending on each side the nave from the two extremities; the spaces between the pillars are each fourteen feet four inches, except the two at the east end, which are only eleven feet a-part; but why these differ from the general plan cannot now be conjectured; some remains of paintings have lately been traced on the wall in this part, that had been whitewashed over, but too faint to make out what they were intended to represent. The windows on the north and south sides were small, without any ornaments, but that at the west end is still admired, as a beautiful specimen of gothic architecture. The entrance from the street was through an arched doorway with circular mouldings, and on the opposite side was another leading into the cemetery, and probably to the convent. The length of the church within side, exclusive of the chancel, was seventy-seven feet six inches, and its breadth, including the side aisles, fifty-one feet six inches, the latter being only ten fect six inches each wide. The whole was covered with an enormous heavy tiled roof, reaching nearly to the ground.

At the dissolution, all the lands and tenements belonging to the friars

minors, except the nave and side aisles of the church, were disposed of by letters patent of Henry VIIIth to Robert Stanshawe, for the sum of thirty pounds, and the payment of six shillings and eight pence annually into the augmentation office of the crown rents. This estate is now the property of Launcelot Austwick, esq. of this place.

The body and side aisles, with a competent way thereto, was afterwards granted, under the letters patent of the same monarch to the corporation, on their own request, to make a town-hall thereof, in lieu of their former one in the Yield hall, where, as they said, the courts were so much annoyed by the battledores used in washing the cloths in the adjoining brook, as to render it impossible for those concerned in them, either to hear or understand what was said. This grant was confirmed in the charter granted to the corporation, the 2d of Elizabeth, with the liberty of making what use of it they might think fit. However, it does not appear that it ever was converted to the intended purpose; for soon after the above grant, it was appropriated to the use of a general work house for the three parishes, or rather of the town. under the superintendance and management of the corporation, and principally at their expense, from lands perhaps purchased with money left for that purpose by some charitable person, which being contrary to the act of mortmain, was probably contested, as we may gather from the following case in Jacob's Law Dictionary:

"If one devise so much a year for the poor, &c. leaving a-sets in goods; this is good, and the executors will be forced to buy as much land, and to assure it to that use. And if a devise be to the poor people maintained in the hospital of St. Lawrence of Reading (where the mayor and burgesses, capable to take in mort-main, do govern the hospital) albeit the poor, not being a corporation, are not capable by that name to take; yet the devise is good, and commissioners appointed to enquire into lands given to hospitals, may order him that has the lands, to assure it to the mayor and burgesses for the maintenance of the hospital. 43 Eliz."

Afterwards, when each parish, in consequence of the acts passed in this reign for the better regulation and maintenance of the poor, were obliged separately to provide for their own poor, this place was made the common prison for all persons offending the laws within the bounds of the corporation; for which use it is still appropriated, but to render it more airy, the roof over the nave has been taken down, and the aisles converted into cells for the prisoners.

Some vaults have been discovered in the body of the church, without coffins, or any memorials of the persons interred in them; and in 1728, at a small distance from the east end of the church, in the part which was probably the original chancel, was found, near the surface of the ground, a stone coffin, with part of a skeleton undecayed, but to whom it belonged is uncertain; it had no lid to it, and appeared to have been originally arched over, or covered with tiles. On digging for the foundation of a house lately erected on this spot, the remains of several bodics were discovered, probably the remains of the friars belonging to this establishment.

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Depending entirely for their maintenance on the alms of the charitable, bestowed in support of an institution which had few inducements to recommend it, and those very much abridged by the influence of the new doctrines, the friars very willingly signed the following surrender of their house to the commissioners appointed for that purpose, without (as it appears) any provision being made for their future subsistence.

" Forasmuch as we do now consider, as well by daily experience as by example and doctrine of divers well-learned persons, which have heretofore professed divers sort of pretended religions, that the very true way to perfection, and to please God, is ministered unto us sincerely and sufficiently, by the most wholesome doctrine of Christ, his apostles and evangelists, and after declared by the holy fathers in the primitive church of Christ, and doth not consist in the traditions and inventions of man's wit, in wearing of a grey, black, white, or any other colored garment, cloak, frock or coat, in girding ourselves upon our outward garments, with girdles full of knots, or in like peculiar manner of papistical ceremonies; sequestring ourselves from the uniform, laudable, and conformable manner of living of all other christian men, used many years from the beginning of Christ's religion. Perceiving also, that as well the high estates of this realm, as the common people do note in us, and daily doth lay unto our charges, the detestable crime of hypocrisy, dissimulation and superstition, which draweth their benevolence and supportation from us, whereby we have been in times past in manner only sustained: We, therefore, the guardian and convent of the house, called commonly grey friars of Radynge, considering that we may be the true servants of God, as well in a secular habit, as in a friar's coat; and knowing, and well considering the miserable state we stand in, being fully determined in ourselves to leave all such papistical and strange fashions of living, with the garments appertaining unto the same, with all our mutual and free assents and consents, do most humbly in this behalf, submit ourselves, and every one of us, our house and place we dwell in, and all our buildings, ornaments, utensils, jewels, tythes, commodities, and all our things, whatsoever they be, pertaining unto the same, and by these presents do surrender the same, and yield them up into the hands and disposition of our most noble sovereign lord, the king's majesty, most humbly beseeching the same,

CHAP. freely and without any charge, in consideration of our extreme poverties, to X IV. grant unto every one of us, his letters under writing, and his grace's seal, to change our said habits, and to take such manner of living, as honest secular priests be preferred unto. And we all shall faithfully pray unto Almighty God, long to preserve his most noble grace. In witness of the premises, and every part of the same, we have subscribed our names unto these presents, and have put our common and conventual seal unto the same, the 13th day of the month of September, and in the 30th year of the reign of our sovereign lord, Henry the 8th."

> Peter Schefford, guardian, and S. T. B. Signed, and ten others.

The following records are preserved in the exchequer, respecting this convent, since the dissolution:

De Willielmo Webbe et Wolstano Dixon, occasionato ad ostendendum quo titulo tenent situm fratrum minorum, in Radynge, in comitatu Berksiræ. Hilarii Recorda Eliz. Rotulo 61.

De Johanni Carleton, armiger, occasionato ad ostendendum quo titulo tenet situm prioratus de Reading in comitatu Berksiræ. Michaelis recorda. 12 Jacobi 1mi rotulo 155. But I am inclined to think that this last may refer to some other convent, perhaps the following one, as it does not appear that the convent of the friars minors was ever called a priory, except by Speed, though perhaps in both instances it might be so called through a mistake, arising from the length of time that had elapsed since the dissolution.

The library of the grey friars, as we are informed by Leland, consisted of Beda de Naturis Bestiarum, Alexander Necham super Marcianum Capellum, Alexander Necham Mythologicon, Johannis Walcys Commentarii super Mythologicon Fulgentii. Small as this catalogue is, it was probably superior in number of books to many of the libraries belonging to this order, in other places; for the same author observes, that "Apud Franciscos sunt telæ aranearum in bibliotheca, præterea tineæ, et blattæ, amplius, quicquid alii jactent, nihil, si spectes eruditos libros. Nam ego, invitis fratribus omnibus, curiose bibliothecæ forrulos omnes excussi." In the library of the franciscans, nothing was observable but moths and cobwebs, for whatever others may boast, they had not one learned treatise in their possession, for I myself carefully examined every shelf in the library, though much against the will of all the brethren.

## The Grey Friars in Castle Street.

This convent is mentioned by Leland, who calls it "a late fayre house of grey freres, in Castle-strate." This was probably on the spot where the methodist's chapel was lately erected. This convent must have been very small, as the whole of the ground allotted for the purpose, does not appear to have exceeded a quarter of an acre. The building for the accommodation of the friars, was on the south-west end fronting the street, and the chapel at the south-east corner fronting the area; behind this, on the north side, is supposed to have been their burying ground, from three or four human skeletons having been discovered in that part, on taking down the old jail, though it is not impossible they might be the remains of some of the criminals executed and buried here, before it became customary to inter them in the north-west corner of St. Mary's church-yard, in like manner as they are now buried within the bounds of the present new jail.

The chapel was a very small edifice without any ornaments. It was only thirty-feet six inches long, by twelve feet six inches wide, within the walls; the chancel was only ten feet long, and proportionably narrow; the walls were rather more than two feet think, the heighth could not be ascertained. The only entrance was from the street, the door-way was small and low, and on the right hand on entering, was a niche in the wall for the holy water pot. Under the altar, and in the body of the chapel, several vaults were discovered on removing the rubbish, but they had been previously emptied of their contents.

Hutchinson, in his history of Dorsetshire, mentions one Margaret Twinio, of Reading, who, by her will, dated in the year 1500, ordered her body to be interred in the chapel of St. Francis, in the grey friars there, near the tomb of her father and mother. There was certainly no chapel belonging to the convent in Friar-street, except this might be so called from its forming a part of the same community; this therefore was most probably the chapel of St. Francis, mentioned in the will where this lady was interred; and if so, the remains of the cossin and bones found in 1728, within the site of the chancel of the church of the grey friars, as supposed by Mr. Coates, could not have been her's. From the very small space occupied by this fraternity, they could not have been very numerous, unless we suppose the greater part to have been generally absent on missions, a supposition not altogether improbable, when the nature of their institution is considered. These, like their brethren in Friar-street, living wholly on alms, had no settled revenue to be returned by the commissioners, nor any property, except their house, which, in consequence of the late acts of parliament in the reign of Henry VIII, devolved to the crown, who soon after disposed of it, either by gift or purchase, to the magistrates of the county, who converted it into the common prison for debtors, and persons committing crimes within their jurisdiction; and so it continued, with some alterations, 'till 1798, when being disposed of to the religious society called methodists, they caused the

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whole to be taken down, and the present chapel erected on its site. According to Tanner, it was erected in the fourteenth century.

### St. Edmond's Chapel.

At the west end of Friar-street, called Chapel-hill, was situated St. Edmond's chapel, founded in 1284, by Lawrence Burgess, bailiff of the town, by permission of the abbot, "on condition of his giving an endowment for its support, who built a hermitage near it, where he died. This chapel was descrated in the time of abbot Thorne, as appears by a memorial presented against him in 1479, to king Edward IV. for various instances of misconduct. The memorial states, that this chapel, wherein were laid the bones of many christians, was then become a barn." It was situated on a triangular piece of ground, formed by the Chapel-hill, and the road leaving to Caversham, containing about half an acre. It had probably, from the above circumstances, become the property of the crown, before the reformation, when it was annexed to the king's manor of Battel. In the time of the civil war, in the reign of Charles I. this chapel was converted into an invincible fort, called Harrison's barn, and afterwards, about the year 1750, was taken down, and re-erected at Battel farm, where it now is.

## Colney Chantry.\*

This chantry or chapel in St. Mary's church, was instituted in the reign of Richard II. probably by one of the Colney family, for the souls of king Edward III. of Thomas Colney, John Colney, and William Catour, and for the souls of all the faithful deceased, with a distinct incumbent, who was nominated by the chief magistrate of the borough.

How the masters of the guild-merchant became possessed of this right is uncertain, but there can be no doubt of their holding it from its first foundation, and that the master for the time being might not be deprived of his right, in case of a vacancy during his mastership, the "tres chartas pertinentes ad cantariam de Colney;" the three charters or writings belonging to Colney chantry were always delivered to him on his entry into office, together with the charters of liberties, a ceremony that was continued for some time after the dissolution.

<sup>\*</sup> Chantries were either small churches, chapels, or particular altars in some cathedral, church, &c. endowed with lands, or other revenues, for the maintenance of one or more priests, daily to sing mass, and perform divine service for the souls of the founders, and for such others as were by them appointed. Of these chantries or free chapels, there were at the dissolution 2374, and when to be sold in the second year of Edward VI. were valued together at about 2593% per anamy, and were sold for 6249% 145, being nearly eighteen years purchase. Strype's. Mem.

<sup>4</sup> Lyson's Britannia.

How this chantry was endowed is uncertain, but it appears from the following entry in the corporation diary, that it was possessed of a certain tenement in Reading, but where situated, or how it was afterwards disposed of, I have not been able to learn.



"At this congregation, a consultation was had for a lease of a tenement belonging unto Colney chantry, let unto Henry Lynacre, by sir Richard Turner, chaplain of the said chantry, by indenture, for the term of thirty-one years, beginning at the nativity of our Lord, in the twenty-second year of the reign of king Henry VIII, Richard a Man then being major, at the which consultation it was agreed, that if it fortune an exchange to be of the said chaplain, and a new one to be admitted within the said term of thirty-one years, that the mayor then for the time being, do give and grant the said chantry to him that shall have it, with this addition, that he shall perform and fulfil the grant of the said indenture and lease."

From so much precaution being taken to prevent the succeeding incumbent from reaping any advantage from this part of his income, it may be inferred that the lease, or rather the fine paid for it, was very advantageous to the lessor, who was probably the son of Mr. Richard Turner, a gentleman so high in the corporation, as to be chosen mayor five times in the space of eighteen years, and whose influence, probably induced his brethren of the corporation, to consent to an act so unjustifiable,

## List of the Incumbents.

| John Corneys .   | Anno | 1382 | John Andrews .    | Anno | 1454 |
|------------------|------|------|-------------------|------|------|
| Henry Hayham .   |      | 1393 | 11                |      | 1465 |
| Andrew Carpenter |      | 1398 | Stephen Whitgrave | •    | 1502 |
| •                | •    | 1419 | Thomas Justice .  |      | 1508 |
| John Asser .     |      | 1420 | Edward Colyer ,   |      | 1509 |
| John Meer        |      | 1453 | Richard Turner .  | •    | 1523 |

The latter gentleman was the last incumbent, and had an annuity of six pounds per annum settled on him for life, when the chantry was dissolved in the reign of Henry VIII.

# St. Mary's Parish and Church.

#### CHAPTER XV.

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THE parish of St. Mary is generally supposed to be included in that part of the borough which was first built upon, and therefore is considered the most ancient of the three parishes of which the town is at present composed.

It is bounded on the north by the river Thames, which separates it from Caversham, on the west side as far as the bridge, from whence, taking in a small mead, now a whitening manufactory, it passes along the centre of the high road, and the lane called the Workhouse-lane to the Pangbourn-road, where, turning to the left, it passes along the middle of Broad-street and Butcher-row to the end formerly called Tutte-hill, from thence down Yield-hall, now Hillhall, to a ditch at the bottom, which forms the boundary on the south, and passing under the north end of the Bear inn to the Back-brook, and from thence to the Kennet above the Lock, which from this place becomes the boundary line between this parish and St. Giles's, the remainder on the west side is included within the bounds of the borough, but the hamlet of Southcot belonging to this parish, extends beyond the limits of the borough. The making the river Kennet navigable in 1720, had so confused the line of demarcation between the parishes of St. Mary and St. Giles, that, to prevent any further altercations respecting their boundaries, it was found necessary, in 1788, for each of the vicars with the churchwardens and other respectable inhabitants of the two parishes, to make a survey of the whole line, when it was agreed, "that the slip of land adjoining the Penlock-mead, and the mead itself, about four acres, more or less, are in the possession of St. Mary's, and also a slip near the Wire-mills, and a meadow and coppice of about four acres, called in Mr. Blagrave's map Wallet-mead, near the And it has since been proved, that a meadow called Dodd's mead, of three acres, near the said mills, belongs to St. Mary's parish, whose officers have since received the taxes for the same."1

The church belonging to this parish is supposed to have been the first religious fabric erected in this place after the conversion of the inhabitants, from which circumstance it has generally been called the minster, giving its name to the adjoining street. It is a plain massive building without either internal or external ornaments, except in the tower, which is composed of small compartments of flints and stone placed checker-wise. Its form is square, with octangular buttresses at each corner, surmounted with light pinnacles; in that at the north-east corner, is the stair-case leading to the leads, which are surrounded with battlements. The body of the church consists of the nave and side aisle, with the usual encumbrance of pews to accommodate the parishioners, which in this country detract so much from the otherwise venerable appearance of our churches. At the east end, is a large handsome chancel, with some neat monuments to the memory of some of the principal benefactors to the town.

In 1547 the old church, which was probably that first erected here by our Saxon ancestors, being found very much decayed, was taken down, and the present structure erected in its stead, except the spire, which was left standing till 1594, when it was blown down in a violent storm of wind. The expense of rebuilding the church, according to the churchwardens accounts, was only 1241. 3s. 5d. including the old materials, and those derived from the interior of the abbey. The expense of erecting the tower was in part paid by a rate on the inhabitants, and in part by the sum of fifty pounds, bequeathed by Mr. John Kenrick in 1624 towards completing the pinnacles.

In 1580 the chancel was wainscoted and furnished with seats at the expense of the parishioners, as appears from the following entry:

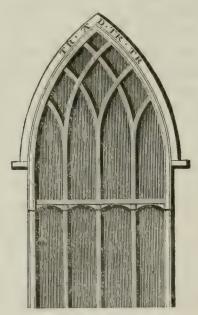
"The parish, this year, at their own proper costs and charges, and by their own good will, and well disposed minds, and because it is requisite and godly, for every christian to come most reverently, orderly, and with all humility to that excellent table of the Lord's supper, being unto them that worthily receive the same, a pearl of most precious prize; and seeing heretofore how disorderly, for want of good government, and lacking of decent room, the said place was disordered, hath caused the chancel to be wainscoted, and seated round about, which cost fourteen pounds, saving, and towards which, Mr. William Powell, vicar, of his own good will, and so to instigate the parishioners in this so godly a deed, gave towards the same forty shillings, and there was laid out of the church stock thirteen shillings and four pence, the remainder was raised by a tax on the seats from eight pence to one penny each, yearly."

The dissolution, and consequent destruction of the abbey, at this period.

CHAP, was a favorable circumstance for the parishioners, as it enabled them to furnish themselves with a great proportion of the materials they wanted, from the spoils of that once stately fabric, at little more than the expense of taking them down and carrying them away. Among other charges for this purpose, in the churchwardens' books, we find the following:

| " Payde for takyng downe of the quyer in the abbeye, and   | €. | s. | d. |
|------------------------------------------------------------|----|----|----|
| the carryage home of the same twentye one lodes,           | 0  | 10 | 6  |
| " Payde for the rowfe in the abbeye, -                     | 6  | 18 | 8  |
| " Payde for twentye one lodes carryage of tymber out of    |    |    |    |
| the abbeye,                                                | 0  | 6  | 8  |
| " Payde to Serjeante Hynde for the pyllers,                | 0  | 10 | 0  |
| " Payde for the door that stood in the cloyster, and for a |    |    |    |
| stowe in the church,                                       | 0  | 8  | 0  |
| "Payde the carter for a lode of stone carriage out of the  |    |    |    |
| abbey,                                                     | 0  | 2  | 6  |

It is probable the door here mentioned, is that at the west end of the church, which is evidently of an older date than the rest of the building; the jambs and lintel are of massive free stone, and on each side is an escutcheon, like those on the sides of the west door of St. Lawrence's church, but the arms are no longer discernible. Over the door, is a window, in the Norman style of architecture, as here represented, with the letters T. R. three times repeated,



and, near the point of the arch, the letters A. and D.; the former of which, from its make, seems of an earlier date than the construction of this church.

From all these evidences, it appears that the greater part of this building was erected from the spoils of the abbey, and particularly from its church, to which it is no doubt indebted for its doors and windows, as well as for its pillars and roof above mentioned.

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The first instance that occurs, after the building of the church, of the election of a parish clerk, was in 1571, when Mr. John Marshal was chosen to fill that office; the duties of which, as well as the emoluments, were carefully registered in the following entry in the church books:

"And, for the more orderly discharge of divine service, it was agreed by all the parishioners present, that from henceforth John Marshall, now being admitted clerk, and sexton, shall have thirteen shillings and four pence per annum; in consideration thereof, he shall, from time to time, see the church clean kept, the seats swept and clean made, the mats beaten, the dogs driven out of the church, the windows made clean, and all other things done that shall be necessary to be done for the good and cleanly keeping of the church, and the quiet of divine service." In addition to these duties, Mr. Marshall was afterwards ordered to ring the eight o'clock bell, for which he was to be paid three shillings and four-pence per annum; but whether this custom of ringing the curfew bell, as it is called, was introduced at this time, or whether it was of an older date, is uncertain, though it is generally supposed to have owed its origin to the arbitrary mandate of William the Conqueror, as a signal for the inhabitants to put out their fires and candles at a certain hour; but of this I believe we have no historical proof. William was too great a politician to have resorted to such an useless exertion of power; which must rather have irritated a high spirited nation, as yet unaccustomed to submission, than reduced them to that state of passive obedience it was his interest to have brought them to. Moreover, this exercise of arbitrary power, not only in a new reign, but at the commencement of a new dynasty, was as impolitic as ill calculated to answer the end proposed; because neither night nor darkness are exclusively necessary for political intrigues, or if they were, their absence would not deter the assertors of national freedom from uniting for the purpose of wresting that sacred right from the hands of a despot. If we allow the story its full force, how can we account for the hours appointed for this purpose, in Reading, being different in different parishes? Is it to be supposed, that the inhabitants of St. Lawrence's parish, whose bell is rung at nine, were indulged with one hour more for their nocturnal meetings than their neighbors in St. Mary's? Certainly not. We may therefore conclude, that this story of the curfew, could have no other foundation than

the reveries of one or two monkish historians, who wrote long after the time the fact is supposed to have happened. Rapin says, that Polydore Virgil, a foreigner, was the first that mentioned this degrading circumstance, deceived perhaps by the following passage in Malmesbury, who speaking of Henry I. says, "Lucernarum usum noctibus in curia restituit, qui fuerat tempore fratris intermissus," i. c. he restored in his court the use of lamps at night, which had been disused in his brother William Rufus's reign—such is the foundation of this foolish story, which has been adopted by most of our historians, notwithstanding the silence of contemporary writers, particularly Matthew Paris, who makes no mention of it. For these reasons, I am inclined to place it among those fables which are still suffered to disgrace our national history.

This is the first mention in the parish books of this bell, the ringing of which at stated hours, was of singular utility to the manufacturing part of the community, at a time when clocks were so far from being of that general use they now are, that very few parish churches, except in large towns, possessed one; without, therefore, recurring to distant ages for the introduction of the curfew bell, we may conclude, that its original intention was merely to regulate the hour, and serve as a signal for the workmen to begin and leave off work.\* As some trades began work earlier and left off later than others, so we find different hours appointed for ringing the curfew bell. At St. Lawrence's, as now, the hours were five in the morning and nine at night, but, at St. Mary's, six in the morning and eight at night; this difference arose from the nature f the manufactures carried on in each parish. In St. Lawence's, they were more various than in St. Mary's, which seems to have been almost exclusively occupied in the woollen manufacture: these, it is probable, did not work so many hours as the other tradesmen, as is observable at the present day, some manufacturers working more hours than others, and therefore it became necessary for the signal bells to be rung at different periods. This custom of tolling the bells at appointed hours, is still

Clarke of the Bow bell, with the yellow locks, For thy late ringing, thy head shall have knocks.

Whereunto the clerke replying wrote-

Children of Cheape, hold you all still, For you shall have the Bow bell rung at your will."

<sup>\*</sup> This idea of the use of these bells is confirmed by the following passage in Stowe's Survey of London: "In the year 1469, it was ordained by a common councell, that the Bow bell should be nightly rung at nine of the clock. This bell being usually rung somewhat late, as seemed to the young men, prentises, and other in Cheape, they made and set up a rime against the clerke, as followeth:

continued, though the causes for which it was instituted no longer exist; the more certain division of time, by means of clocks, having rendered the practice unnecessary.

CHAP.

It was not till 1611 that this parish was at the expense of purchasing a clock to be set up in the church, for which, as the town did not at that time possess a clock-maker, they contracted with a person from Windsor, who agreed to make one for the sum of twenty-four pounds thirteen shillings and eight pence, and to give a bond to the parish, with sufficient sureties, for its keeping time: but, notwithstanding this precaution, the workmanship does not appear to have been very correct, as, in addition to his former duties, Mr. Marshall was ordered "to set it so as to go and strike, as near as he could, at due hours."

In 1614, the arch that divides the chancel from the nave, was built at the expense of the parish, and about the same time the ring of bells was increased by a new one, called "the fourth bell," which did cost one and fifty pounds and sixteen shillings, whereof Mr. doctor Powell the vicar, not only of his good will, love, and zeal, which he beareth towards the honor of God, to have such things provided, that are necessary for the same, but also to stir, incite, provoke, and move the parishioners to be willing and forward in such a good action, he did give towards the said bell the sum of twenty pounds eighteen shillings and seven pence, and the parishioners did pay the rest."

This stimulus, on the part of the worthy doctor, seems to have had its effect, for, in the following year (1604) "the right worshipful lady Bennet Webbe, widow of sir William Webbe, knt. citizen and ironmonger, of London, and lord mayor in 1591, who was born at Reading, did give one great bell, by the request of the said doctor Powell, to the honor of God, to finish and make up the whole ring, called the fifth bell, weighing one and twenty hundred weight, one quarter and nineteen pounds, and all other things belonging to the same, which did cost one hundred and one pounds, and sixteen shillings, which great bell is called our Lady bell, and it is worthy to be registered, for to remain in memoriam sempiternam." At what time the present ring of eight bells was completed is not mentioned.

In 1679, the south window, opposite the pulpit, was built by the church-wardens, "which was the only thing they did that deserved praise."

About the same time, an order was made for repairing the roads within the parish, they having become almost impassable, by which "all persons paying two pence a week or upwards, should pay or work six days: all such as paid one penny a week, were to pay or work four days: and those that paid one

halfpenny a week, or were above the degree of receiving collections, should pay or work two days, and those who refused to pay were to be indicted at the sessions."

The revenues of the vicar, consist of the great and small tithes throughout the parish, easter dues, and surplice fees. The glebe consists only of the ground attached to the parsonage house, and a small piece of ground called the Lock-mead, or the Vicar's orchard, containing fifty-one square or superficial poles, now making part of the garden belonging to the Bear inn. There is beside a house, on the south side of Castle-street, belonging to the vicarage. The rectorial tythes were granted by queen Elizabeth, in 1573.

In addition to the above, the vicar receives ten pounds per annum, the gift of Mr. Kendrick, for reading morning prayers, out of which sum he pays the clerk thirty shillings. He also receives three pounds eleven shillings per annum, being the interest of S. S. stock purchased with the sum of one hundred pounds, left for that purpose by Mrs. Thorne. John Blagrave, esq. in 1611, left ten shillings per annum to the vicar for the time being, for ever, for a sermon to be preached on Good-friday; and Mrs. West, in 1717, left one pound per annum for a sermon to be preached on St. Thomas's-day every year, at one of the three churches alternately.

Beside the above gifts for extra duties, the vicar receives annually one pound ten shillings, being one third of the tenth part of Mr. Allen's gift.

The church is rated in the king's books at eleven pounds twelve shillings and three pence halfpenny, and the yearly tenths at one pound three shillings and two pence three farthings. The living is in the gift of the lord chancellor,

Vicars of this parish since the erection of the present church.

| Mr. William Powell, -  |     |   | 1571 |
|------------------------|-----|---|------|
| John Dennison, D. D.   | .ee |   | 1614 |
| Thomas Bunbury, D. D.* |     | _ | 1628 |
| Christopher Fowler,†   | -   |   | 1641 |

#### 1 Parish Register.

<sup>\*</sup> Of Baliol college, was admitted D. D. June 10, 1644. He succeeded doctor John Dennison in the vicarage of St. Mary's, Reading, but being put out there by the presbyterians, when that town came into their possession, he fled to Oxford for protection.—Wood's Athenæ.

t Christopher Fowler, son of John Fowler, of Marlborough, at the age of sixteen, became a servitor of Magdalen college in 1627, where continuing till he was B. A. he retired to St. Edmund's-hall, took the degree of master of that faculty, entered into holy orders, and preached for some time in Oxford, and afterwards at West-woodhay, near Donnington-castle, Berks. At length, upon the turn of the times, in 1641, he closed with the presbyterians (having before been puritanically affected) took the covenant, and became a very conceite and fantastical preacher among them. For by his

#### ST. MARY'S PARISH AND CHURCH.

205

 Peter Mews, LL.D.\*
 1663

 William Lloyd, D. D.
 1667

 Abraham Brookshanks, 1676



very many odd gestures and antic behaviour, (unbecoming the serious gravity to be used in the pulpit,) he drew constantly to his congregation a numerous crowd of silly women, and young people, who seemed to be hugely taken and ennamoured with his obstreporousness, and undecent cants. Soon after this, being a zealous brother for the cause, he became vicar of St. Mary's, Reading, and assistant to the commissioners of Berks, for the ejection of such that were then called by the godly party, scandalous, ignorant, and insufficient ministers, and schoolmasters, and at length fellow of Eaton college, near Windsor, notwithstanding he had refused the engagement. After the restoration, he lost his fellowship of Eaton, and being deprived of his cure at Reading, for non-conformity, retired to London, and afterwards to Kennington, near Newington St. Mary, Surrey, and carried on the trade of conventicling to his last. His works are these:

Demonium Meridianum, Satan at Noon, or Antichristian Blasphemies, Antichristian Divilismes, &c. being a sincere relation of the proceedings of the commissioners of the county of Berks, against John Pordage, late rector of Bradfield in Berks, who being ejected by the said commissioners, as having been conversant with evil spirits, as they said, and for blasphemy, ignorance, scandalous behaviour, devilismes, uncleanness, &c. wrote a book called 'Innocency Appearing,' &c. in his own vindication.

Demonium Meridianum, 2d part, discovering the slanders and calumnies cast upon some corporations, with forged and false articles upon the author, in a pamplet entitled, The Case of Reading rightly Stated, &c. by the abettors of the said John Pordage.

A Word to Infant Baptism, and a Glaunce to Mr. Pindarres his Arrows against Babylon.

Answer of the Mayor, Aldermen, and Assistants of Reading in Berks, to a scandalous Pamphlet entitled, "The Case of the Town of Reading stated." These two last are printed with the second part of Demonium Meridianum.

Sober Answer to an Angry Epistle, directed to all public Teachers in the Nation. In the composition of which work he was assisted by one Simon Ford, a minister in Reading, but which was soon after severely animadverted upon by that noted quaker George Fox, in his book entitled, 'The Great Mystery of the Great Whore unfolded,' &c. Beside which he wrote a great variety of Sermons-At length he died in Southwark, in the latter end of January 1673, and was buried in St. John Baptist's church-yard, near Dowgate, in London.—Wood's Athenæ.

\* Peter Mews, LL. D. bishop of Winchester, was a native of Purse-candel, in the county of Dorset, born 25th of March, 1618. He was educated, at Merchant Taylors school, by Dr. Winnif his uncle, then dean of St. Paul's, and thence elected scholar, and fellow of St. John's college, Oxford, in 1637. He became A. B. 1641, M. A. 1645, and, during the civil war, was an officer in the king's army. He went on the king's service into Holland in 1648, but returned to his college and proceeded LL. D. 1660. He was successively rector of South Warmborough, Hants, and St. Mary's, in Reading, archdeacon of Huntingdon, canon of St. David's and Windsor 1662. He was made archdeacon of Berks 1665, on which he resigned the archdeaconry of Huntingdon. In 1667, he was made golden prebendary of St. David's, and succeeded Dr. Bailey in the presidentship of St. John's. He was vice-chancellor of Oxford, from 1669 to 1672. Dean of Rochester 1670, and bishop of Bath and Wells, February 9th, 1672, in which diocess he was greatly beloved by the loyal gentry, who were almost unanimous in all elections, and public affairs during his residence amongst them. On the death of bishop Morley, he was translated to Winchester, November 22, 1684, and

| William Reeves, -        | -   |   | 1711 |
|--------------------------|-----|---|------|
| Francis Fox, M. A.       |     | - | 1726 |
| Robert Bolton, D. C. L.* | -   |   | 1738 |
| Charles Sturges, -       |     | - | 1763 |
| Rev. Archdeacon Nares,   | - , |   | 1805 |
|                          | _   |   |      |

A terrier or rent roll of St. Mary's parish in 1556.

| 0,4 0,0 200 | , , ,       |                                            |                                           |
|-------------|-------------|--------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------|
|             | £.          | 8.                                         | d.                                        |
| -           | O           | 0                                          | 6                                         |
| -           | 0           | 0                                          | 1                                         |
| -           | 0           | 0                                          | 3                                         |
| -           | 0           | 0                                          | 4                                         |
| field,      |             |                                            |                                           |
| *           | 0           | 0                                          | 6                                         |
| -           | 0           | 1                                          | 8                                         |
| called      |             |                                            |                                           |
| -           | 0           | 6                                          | 8                                         |
|             | 0           | 6                                          | 0                                         |
| -           | 1           | 8                                          | 0                                         |
|             | 1           | 4                                          | 0                                         |
| m . 1       | -           | -                                          |                                           |
| Total       | 3           | 8                                          | 0                                         |
|             |             |                                            |                                           |
|             | 1           | 0                                          | 0                                         |
| ion of      |             |                                            |                                           |
| -           | 2           | 8                                          | 0                                         |
|             |             |                                            |                                           |
| -           | 3           | 8                                          | 0                                         |
|             | -<br>field, | £.  0  0  0  field,  0  called  1  Total 3 | £. s. 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 |

next year, was commanded by the king, in compliance with the request of the gentry of Somerset, to go against Monmouth, and did eminent service at the battle of Sedgemoor; where he managed the artillery, for which he was rewarded with a rich medal. He was a prelate remarkable for his hospitality, generosity, justice, and frequent preaching. He died November 9, 1706, aged 89, and was buried in Winchester cathedral.—Hutchin's History and Antiquities of Dorsetshire.

He presented the corporation of Reading with the picture of archbishop Laud, now in the council-chamber, but whether it was an original, taken in the archbishop's life time, or only a copy, is uncertain. See page 48.

#### \* He was also dean of Carlisle.

+ Now called Lock-mead, situated behind the Bear inn.

\*The site of those marked thus cannot now be ascertained; though I am inclined to think Cornish-cross stood where the weighing-engine now is,

| Brought forward Rent of Mr. Dixon's house in the Butts, Rent of Mr. Earles's house in Castle-street, Rent of Mr. John Deane's house, | - | •     | £. s. d,<br>3 8 0<br>2 0 0<br>1 10 0<br>3 0 6 | CHAP. |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---|-------|-----------------------------------------------|-------|
|                                                                                                                                      |   | Total | 9 18 6                                        |       |

Copy of an ancient deed relative to some premises situated in St. Mary's Butts, belonging to this parish.

"To all faithful christians, to whom this present writing shall come, I John, by divine permission, abbot of Redyng and convent of the same place, greeting in the Lord everlasting.

" Tibereas, Henry Webbe and John Wyke, procurators or churchwardens of the parish church of the blessed Mary of Redyng aforesaid, hold of us in right of the aforesaid church of the blessed Mary, a certain tenement situate in the town of Redyng aforesaid, in a certain street called from antiquity Olde-street, otherwise Wode-street, in a certain place called Bernard'shill, containing in length fourscore feet, and in breadth thirty feet of legal measure, yielding therefore yearly to us and our successors two shillings and sixpence per annum, to be paid at the feast of St. Michael the archangel, for all service; Be it known, that we, through reverence of God, and for the honor of the glorious virgin Mary, the estate and possession, which the aforesaid procurators of the church aforesaid have in the aforesaid tenement, with the appertenances, to them and their successors procurators of the church aforesaid, deem it meet for the rent of twelve pence for the rent aforesaid, to be paid yearly at the feast of St. Michael the archangel, in lieu of all exactions and demands, to confirm, ratify, and for us and our successors, by these presents, to grant and approve, and further for us and our successors, to remise, release, and quit claim to the aforesaid Henry Webbe and John Wyke, procurators of the church aforesaid, and their successors, all our right and claim and demand, which, in the aforesaid tenement, with the appertenances, we and our successors can in future have, saving always to us and to our successors, the said rent of twelve pence. In witness to this our present deed, we have affixed our common seal.

"Dated at Reading aforesaid, in our chapter house, the tenth day of the month of March, in the twenty-eighth year (14%) of the reign of king Henry the sixth."

It is probable the land here mentioned as making part of the possessions of the abbey, was alienated at the dissolution, and consequently lost to this parish; but if it is included in the foregoing rent roll, it might be that now let to Mr. Dixon, though, from the improvement of the road before it, it cannot be said to be situated on a hill.

For the benefactions belonging to this parish, see the list of charities.

|       | Remarkable entries in the churchwardens book.              | 2   |     | ,            |
|-------|------------------------------------------------------------|-----|-----|--------------|
| 1555  | Payde the man for watching the sepulcher,                  | £,  | 0   | <i>d</i> . 8 |
|       | Payde the mynstrells,                                      | 1   | 6   | 8            |
|       | Payde for a cap and two fethers,                           | 0   | 1   | 6            |
| 1557  | Payde to the mynstrells and the hobby horse upon May-day   | , 0 | 3   | 0            |
|       | Payde to the morrys daunsers and the mynstrells mete and   |     |     |              |
|       | drynke at Whitsontyde,                                     | 0   | 3   | 4            |
|       | Payde to the paynter for paynting their cotes, -           | 0   | 2   | 8            |
|       | Payde upon Holy Thursday for the Lords breakfast,          | 0   | . 2 | 1            |
| 1558  | Payde for hallowing the altars,                            | 0.  | 14  | 0            |
|       | Payde for a pound and halfe of frankinsense, -             | 0   | 0   | 11           |
| 1566  | Item for makyng of the butts,                              | 0   | 8   | 0            |
|       | Item for wrytinge of the scripture about the church,       | 0   | 8   | 4            |
| 1570  | Paid for two paxe of cardes,                               | 0   | 0   | 4            |
| 1571  | It is agreed that Mr. Powell, vicar, shall have half the   |     |     |              |
|       | pascall money, he paying for half the bread and wine,      |     |     |              |
| 7.004 | according to the agreement made with the old vicar.        |     |     |              |
| 1604  | Item to the ringers when the queene came through the town, | 0   | 18  | 0            |
| 1612  | Item to the ringers when the king came through the town,   | 0   | 7   | 0            |
| 1622  | Paid the two laborers to playne the grounde where the      |     |     |              |
| 1000  | butts should be,                                           | 0   | 5   | 6            |
| 1626  | Paid for carving Mr. John Kenricke's arms over the         |     |     |              |
| 1649  | south arch of the tower,                                   | 0   | 2   | 6            |
| 1643  | For ringing for the king, at his return from Branford      |     |     |              |
| 1654  | after the fight, -                                         | 0   | 1   | 6            |
| 1670  | Paid for ringing for the lord protector,                   | 0   | 6   | 8            |
| 1070  | It was ordered that Lovejoy's boy shall be carried to      |     |     |              |
|       | London, to be touched for the king's evill, at the         |     |     |              |
| 1674  | charge of the parish.                                      |     |     |              |
| 1011  | It was ordered, that any person receiving strangers into   |     |     |              |

|      | their houses, and not giving security to the parishioners      |    |    |    | Снар.      |
|------|----------------------------------------------------------------|----|----|----|------------|
|      | within 40 daies, their taxes should be doubled.                | £. | s. | d. | XV.        |
| 1687 | Paid for ringing when the king came,                           | 0  | 15 | 0  | <b>~</b> , |
| 1688 | Paid for ringing when the prince of Wales was borne,           | 0  | 6  | 0  |            |
|      | Paid for ringing when the prince of Orange was proclaimed,     | 0  | 10 | 0  |            |
| 1691 | Paid for ringing three days at the king's return from Ireland, | 1  | 19 | 0  |            |
|      | Memorandum: that upon the 22d day of November Tanfield         |    |    |    |            |
|      | Vatchell, esq. and Anthony Blagrave, esq. were elected         |    |    |    |            |
|      | burgesses for this borough, and both of them inhabitants       |    |    |    |            |
|      | of this parish.                                                | 64 |    |    |            |

## St. Lawrence's Parish and Church.

#### CHAPTER XVI.

THE parish of St. Lawrence is situated on the north-east extremity of the borough, and is bounded on that side by the Thames, on the south by the river Kennet, which separates it from the parish of St. Giles, and on the west by Caversham-road, and the boundary line of St. Mary's parish.

Though this is the least extensive of the three parishes, it is nearly equal to the others in the number of inhabitants, and possesses the greater part of the trade of the town, including within its boundaries the wharfs, the markets, and most of the principal shops for the sale of goods of every description. The church stands on the north side of the market-place, at the entrance into the Forbury. It was erected towards the close of the fifteenth century, on the site of the original church dedicated to St. Lawrence. Like that of St. Mary, it was indebted to the abbey for some of the materials used in its construction, consisting however chiefly of stone work, such as door-ways, windowframes, and pillars, it having been previously despoiled of its timbers, doors, &c. for other buildings. Among the parts appropriated to this building, may be reckoned the great western door-way, composed of a circular arch, ornamented with rich mouldings, from which were suspended, on each side, the arms of the abbey, but so obliterated, by the corrosive power of the air, as to be no longer visible.\* On one of the pillars adjoining the corporationpew, is a very ancient escutcheon, engraved apparently on wood in two compartments, dexter azure, the virgin Mary with the infant Jesus on her left arm, and a lighted torch in her right hand-sinister, on the top a lamb, and under it the figure of an ass, rudely carved. This also, probably belonged to

<sup>\*</sup> These have been lately restored.

the abbey, the virgin and child being the principal figures on their seal, but can have no reference to the corporation.

CHAP. XVI.

The form of this church very much resembles that of St. Mary, but is superior to it in the lightness and elegance of its construction, notwithstanding the latter is generally preferred for its variegated tower, whose novel appearance, by its striking effect at first sight, obtains the preference of the observer before the mind has time to form a just opinion; whereas it is only from a minute inspection, that we discover the several beauties of the former, and acknowledge, that in uniformity of design, simplicity of style, and elegance of its decorations, it is superior to St. Mary's, in every particular necessary for the construction of a building appropriated to religious worship.\*

On each side the west door, next the street, are nitches, for the reception of images, but these were taken away, either at the reformation, or in the subsequent civil war, in the reign of Charles I. Beside those on the outside the church for ornament, there were within, for religious worship, those of St. Clement, St. Thomas, St. Lawrence, our lady Mary, St. Leonard, St. Vincent, St. John, St. George, St. Nicholas, and the twelve apostles, with Judas Iscariot, but this last, with the holy sepulchre, the coffin, and the instruments of the crucifixion, were perhaps only used at the easter festivals, the others served to decorate the different altars; these were seven in number. The high altar, adorned with the crucifix in the centre, and the images of St. Mary and St. John on each side, of silver gilt, weighing six pounds seven ounces, St. Thomas's† altar, St. George's, St. John's, Our Lady's, the Sepulchral altar, and Jesus' altar.

In the reign of Edward VI. commissioners were appointed to visit all the churches, to remove the images, and take away the superfluous plate and ornaments, leaving only one or two chalices of silver, with linen for the communion table and surplices. The plate, and all things of value, were to be brought to the

\*There is a tradition in the town, that St. Lawrence's was built by an apprentice of the person who constructed St. Mary's, and that his master was so struck with the superiority of this building over his own, that in a fit of vexation he threw himself off St. Mary's steeple and was killed.

+ On repairing this church in 1802, a painting was discovered under the whitewash, on the north east side of the altar, but too much obliterated to be made out. This was probably over the altar of St. Thomas. As this custom of whitewashing the pictures in our churches was very general after the reformation, it is reasonable to suppose, that several of these works of art may, in like manner, have been obliterated in the other churches.

In the churchwarden's book for 1526 is a charge of 6l. 13s. 4d. for painting the transfiguration on the high altar. I have been informed that this was still visible under the whitewash, before the present altar-piece was erected.

<sup>1</sup> King Edward's Journal.

CHAP. XVI. treasurer of the king's household, and the money arising from the sale of the remainder, was to be distributed to the poor, who says the historian, "had, however the least share of it." The quantity of plate, and other things, belonging to this church, given in the following inventory, was taken a few years prior to the reformation:

- "Imprimis, a crosse of silver and gilt, with Mary and John, weying lxxix ounces and a qrt of the gifte of master Nichs More, late vicar.
- "Itm, a sensor of silver gilt without a pan, weying xxx ounces and iij qrts of the gift of———
- "Itm, a nother sensor of silver gilt with an iron pan in hym, weying xxx ounces and iij qrts.
- " Itm, a shipp of silver, weying ix ounces.
- "Itm, a nother shipp of silver weying v ounces, of the gifte of maister Cletche.
- "Itm, ij candle sticks of silver weying xlj ounces of the gifte of Richd Cleche.
- "Itm, ij bokes a gospello and a pistello the one side coverd with silver gilt, with images vppon the same and the other side with boces of silver weying yn all cxxxiiij ovnces, of the gifte of Mr. Richard Smyth, yeoman of the robes with our sourayne lord the kyng.
- "Itm, ij basons of silver weying xlviij ovnces and  $\frac{1}{2}$  of the gifte of Mr. Smyth.
- "Itm, a pip of siluer and gilt with a siluer pyn, waying xvj ovnces and iij qrts hangyng in the church.
- "Itm, a monstre of siluer and gilt weying xxiiij ovnces and iij qrts. for the sacrament.
- "Itm, a crismatorye of siluer gilt weying xxij ovnces and qrt.
- " Itm, a pyp of siluer gilt weying vj ovnces.
- " Itm, ij ernetts\* of silver weying vj ounces and halfe.
- " Itm, a bell of siluer weying viij ounces-
- "Itm, a chalice of siluer and gilt with a crucifix on the fote cnnamelled and the trynitie ennamellyd on the patent weying xxv ovnces.
- "Itm, a nother chalice of siluer and gilt with a crucifix graven in the fote and an hand on the patent weying xviij ovnces.
- "Itm, a nother chalice of siluer and gilt with a crucifix ennamellyd on the fote and an hand on the patent weying xv ounces and iij qrtrs.
- "Itm, a nother chalice of silver and gilt with a crucifix ennamelled on the fote and y trynitys enamelled on the patent, weying xvij ovnces and  $\frac{1}{2}$ .

- "Itm, a nother chalice of siluer gilt with a crucifix on the fote and a vernacle" on the patent weying xiiij ovnces and a qrtr.
- "Itm, another chalice of silver gilt with a crucifix on the fote and a vernacle gilt on the patent, weying xiij ovnces.
- "Itm, a nother chalice of siluer gilt, weying xviij ovnces and a half, of the gifte of William Stamford.
- "Itm, a crosse of siluer and gilt with pte of the holy crosse therein weying vj ovnces and a qrtr.
- "Itm, a gredyron of silver and gilt with a bone of saynt laurence therein, weying iij qrtrs of an ovnce, of the gifte of Thos. lyade Esqr.
- "Itm, a rownde box of copr and gilt with divrs reliques therein.
- "Itm, a table closed with reliques.
- "Itm, iiij knoppis of coppr and gilt.

#### THE VESTMENTS.

- "Imprimis, a cope of clothe of gold of crymson velvett and blewe velvett of the gifte of Mr. Thomas Justice, vicar.
- "Itm, a cope of blewe velvett with flounces imbroidered of the gifte of Thos. Clarke, hosier.
- "Itm, a cope of crymson velvett with orphrayes+ imbroidered, and angells flounces, of the gifte of Mr. Thomas Justice, vicar.
- "Itm, a cope of white damaske tissue with rosys of gold, of the gifte of Raphe White of Okyngham.
- "Itm, a cope of black worsted with branches and birds of red.
- "Itm, a cope of red silke with signes of the son of the gifte of Danl. Robe, of Redyng, monke.
- "Itm, a sewte of blew velvett with flounces imbroidered, of the gifte of Thomas Clarke, hosyer.
- "Itm, a chesible with a vest and all thapparell of blew silke, the orfray red velvett with images and crownes of gold.
- "Itm, a chesible of cloth of bawdekyn, the orfray of cloth of bawdekyn with th'apparell, of the gifte of John Derby, aldeman of london.
- "Itm, a chesible of grene damaske, the orfraye of red silke, with an image of seynt Lawrence, of the gifte of Margaret Parker of faryngdon.
- \* Vernicle, from St. Veronica, whose handkerchief it is pretended received the impression of Christ's face, from his having used it in his way to his crucifixion.
  - + Gold embroidered with frieze.
  - # A tissue of cloth of gold embroidered with silk.

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CHAP. "Itm, a chesible of white damaske with branches of gold, the orfrey of blew velvett, the gifte of John Thorne, abbott of R.

" Itm, ij awter clothes of velvett, blew and blak, of the gifte of master Smyth.

"Itm, a quyshon, the one side cloth of gold, the other side crem color saten, the gift of Mr. Smith.

"Itm, ij pillows, the one side of them of cloth of gold and silver, and the

other side grene saten.

"Itm, iij pyllows of russett ray for weddings.

" Itm, a corpus case, with the salutation of our Lady.

"Itm, a nother of cloth of bawdekyn, with ij lyons.

"Itm, a canapie of crymson velvett imbroidered with gold flounces and the holy tombe in the myddle.

"Itm, a pall of blew velvett imbroidered with flounces of gold, of the gifte

of Thos. Clarke, hosier.

"Itm, a pall of whit silke lyned with lynen cloth for weddings.

"Itm, a cloth to ley in the wedding cheyre.

"Itm, a baner of red sarsenet for the crosse with images of the trinitie and of our ladie.

"Itm, v baners of silke with the armys of England.

"Streamers 3, one of sylke and ij of lynen.

"Itm, ij dext clothes.

"Itm, a knop of gold with tassells of blewe sylke.

" Awter clothes of lynen 20.

"Towells of diapper 7.

"Itm, a cotte for mary magdeleyn, of cloth of gold."

At the accession of queen Mary, these instruments of papal superstition were again introduced into the church, and a new Judas was provided for the use of the paschal, which cost the parish four-pence. And that the old order of things might be more quietly restored, Philip and Mary honored the town with a visit, at the solemnity of restoring the altars to their former places. The high altar was erected in the chancel; St. John's, in the body of the church; the middle altar in the south side, as was also that called our Lady's altar of the nativity, and St. Thomas's, on the north side the chancel. On this occasion, their majesties gave the parish a part of the Forbury to enlarge the church-yard, which, since the dissolution, was found too small for the size of the parish; before this period, many of the parishioners were interred in the abbey cemetery. The new ground was walled round at the expense of the parish, as appears from the following entry in the churchwardens accounts for 1557.

"Memorandum. That in the month of August 1557, and the third and fourth of Philip and Mary, king and queen of England, Fraunce, of both Sicilies, and Ireland, defenders of the faithe, archduke of Austrie, duke of Burgundie, Millayne, and Brabant, counties of Aspurge, Flanders and Tirole, John Bell being then major of Redyng. Hit was graunted by the queny's majestie unto the inhabitants of this parish a certayne grounde next unto the parish churche, for to erect and make thereof a churche yard, as by the wall it doth and may appere, which saide grounde so graunted is in recompence to the parishe, for a nother church yarde belonging unto the parish, lying nexte unto the late churche of the late monasteric there, and from the said inhabitants taken. The charges of makyng the said newe churche yarde was payed by the inhabitants in manner following, to wit, fore everie perche of the saide wall contaynynge eighteen fotes, seven shillings."

"The new church yard, with the altars above mentioned, was consecrated on the second of May following, being Sunday, by William Fynche, suffragan to the bishop of Bath and Wells."

In the following year, on the accession of queen Elizabeth to the throne, the altars were again removed out of the church, and an order of council sent to take down the two pair of organs; but this not being immediately complied with, a more peremptory mandate was sent, when "it was agreed by the worshypfull of the parishe, that the organes in St. John's chaunsell, for that they should not be forfeited into the hands of the organ takers, shoulde be taken downe and solde, and the tymber of them to be applied, to sett up two seats higher for Mr Major and his brethren, above the seats that they now sit in."

The tower was furnished with five bells; the largest weighed 34 cwt. 1 qr. 10 lb, and was presented to the parish by Mr. Harry Kelsal, on which account it was called the Kelsal, or Great Harry; it was consecrated in 1499, according to the superstitious practice of the age, by the vicar, who received six shillings and eight pence for his fee; "and over that sir William Symys, Richard Cleche, and maistres Symys beying god faders and god-moder at the consecration of the same bell, and beryng al other costs to the suffrygan."

This bell was re-cast, by subscription, in 1596, when the weight was increased to 36 cwt. 2 qr. 21 lb. The following is a list of the subscribers:

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|                                        | £. | s. | đ. |
|----------------------------------------|----|----|----|
| Brought over,                          | 9  | 16 | 9  |
| Seventeen parishioners of St. Giles's, | 1  | 5  | 8  |
| The vicar of Shiplake,                 | 0  | 0  | 4  |
| The vicar of Sonning,                  | 0  | 0  | 4  |
| Sir John Radley,                       | 0  | 1  | 4  |
| The miller of Caversham,               | 0  | 0  | 4  |
| Several persons in the country,        | 1  | 4  | 10 |
|                                        |    |    | _  |
| £                                      | 12 | 9  | 7  |
| $oldsymbol{\mathcal{L}}$               | 12 | 9  | 7  |

In 1663, the five bells, with some additional metal, were re-cast, and three more added to their number; these have since been increased to twelve, forming a very complete ring.

I am not certain at what time the first clock was put up in this church, but it must have been soon after its erection, as I find a charge, in the church-wardens' books, "for wire for the clock," as early as 1499.

The honorable Daines Barington, in his History of Clocks, supposes them to have been introduced into this country in the thirteenth century,\* at which period he thinks they were common in several parts of Italy, and, as a proof, quotes the following passage from Dante: †

Indi come orologio, che ne chiami, Nel hora che la sposa d'Iddio surge, A mattinar lo sposa, perche l'ami.

But, the orologio in this place, I conceive means no more than a common bell, which he owns was frequently called by this name, and might have been used, in the above passage, to express the solemn sound of the matin bell.

<sup>\*</sup> Anderson, in his History of Commerce, says, that clocks were not introduced till the four-teenth century; and Brown Willis, in his Account of Mitred Abbeys, says, that "Richard of Wallingford, abbot of St. Albans, presented a clock to that church in 1326, the like whereof was not to be seen in all England:" but whether he meant for the ingenuity of its workmanship, or as being an unique in this country, is doubtful. Father Barré, in his General History of Germany, says, that "in the year of Christ 805, Haroun al Rashid, caliph of the Arabians, sent, among other presents to Charlemagne, a water clock of very uncommon mechanism, considering the age. It was of brass and struck the hours:" and Du Cange, in his Annals, adds, that "this clock shewed the hours by the fall of balls of metal on the bell, and by the figures of knights, which opened and shut doors according to the number of hours." But whatever this instrument was, it could not have been such a clock as is spoken of above.

<sup>+</sup> Dante was born in 1260, and died in 1321.

This opinion is strengthened by the remainder of the passage, which the honorable writer has omitted.

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Che l'una parte e l'altra tira ed urge, Tin, tin, sonando, con si dolce nota, Che 'l ben disposto spirto d'amor turge.

He ceas'd, like solemn chimes at noon of night,
That call the spouse of God, her faith to plight,
And love for love with fervent heart return;
When sound to sound responsive vibrates clear,
And falls so sweetly on the vestal's ear,
She feels her heart with holy ardor burn.——Boyd's Dante.

It is a well known custom in monasteries to summons the monks and nuns to matins, by the chiming of a bell at midnight, or, nel hora che la sposa d'Idio surge, as the poet has expressed it; and the tin, tin, sonando, con si dolce nota, is very applicable to the soft and solemn sound of the chiming bell, but has no similitude to the monotony of a clock striking the hour.

However, whether they were invented in the thirteenth or fourteenth century, it is certain that this is a remarkable early instance of a clock being put up in a country parish church.

Queen Elizabeth was a frequent visiter here, on which occasions a seat was appropriated to her use in the chancel of this church, and when her majesty was present, the seat was hung with tapestry, and the aisles strewed with rushes and flowers. The door on the north side the church was made at her expense, on the solicitation of Mr. Smyth, the vicar, who also obtained from her majesty an order for repairing the chancel, at the expense of the crown, it appearing on the records to have been customary from time immemorial. The following were cited on this occasion:

"Auditor Thomson's his office.

Com. Berks.

"There hath not been anic allowance made for repairing of the chaunsell of St. Lawrence in Redyng before her majesties auditor of the said countie since the beginning of her majestie's reigne hitherto, neverthelesse it should seem that the said chaunsell ys to be repaired by her majestie, for that the same was repaired in the 10th yere of hir highness' reign by Lewis Stockett gent. then surveyor of hir majestie's works, by warrant from the late chansellour of the court of exchequer, as apperith by a certificate under the hand of John Coiners, esquier, hereunto annexed, 30th Junii 1591.

" Exd p. Rica Sutton, in absen.

Jo. Thomson, auditor."

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" Auditor Coiners his office.

"In the act of Lewis Stockett, surveyor of hir majestie's works, anno regni dnæ Elizabeth. regina duodecimo, &c. amonge other ys conteyned as followeth, viz. Reparacons done upon ye house,\* barn and stable and garrets at Redyng, with fourteen pounds fifteen shillings and four pence. For mending and repayryng the chaunsell of the church of St. Lawrence, adjoynyng to the said house, the sum of six pound three shillings and nine pence.

" Exd per Jo. Coiners, aud."

" Office of Works.

"Upon search made within the saide office, yt appereth that in the moneth of September 1568 there was bestowed upon the repaire of the chaunsell of the church of St. Lawrence, adjoynyng to the queen's majastie's howse at Redyng, the sume of fourteen pounds fifteen shillings and ten pence.

"Thomas Fowler."

Annexed to these extracts from the public offices, we find the following entry in the church-wardens' books for the year 1593:

"The chaunsell was lately repaired at the costes of the queen's majestie; our vicar, Mr. Smyth, following the long suite thereof, and obteyned of the lord treasurer, through the reddye helpe and counsell of her majestie's supervisor. And the lord treasurer allotted twenty nine pounds ten shillings, to be received of the queen's auditors, towards the reparacon thereof: being comitted to Mr. Ellys Burgesse, then major, and the said vicar, to be bestowed thereon, which was done according."

At present the chancel is repaired by the parishioners.

This church, like St. Mary's, was not completed till many years after its foundation, as it was not ceiled till 1637, when sir Francis Knollys gave ten pounds towards the expense, and, at the same time, built the small aisle on the south side, for a seat and burial place for himself and family, which, the following year, was consecrated by the bishop of the diocess.

On the same side the church, and in a line with the above-mentioned aisle, is a portico or covered way, called the church walk, built with the sum of one hundred pounds, left for that purpose to the corporation, by John Blagrave, esq. On a stone, over the centre pier, is the following inscription:

Johannes Blagravius,
Generosus Matheseos,
Encomiis celeberrimus,
Libras C. ad ambulacrum
hoc extruendum dedit, quod

<sup>\*</sup> The gate-house, at the entrance into the Forbury, which abutted against the church.





Opus Major Burgensesque (piæ Beneficii hujus inter cetera Memoriæ ergo) perficiendum curarunt. Feb<sup>ii</sup> 1619.\*

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### St. Lawrence's terrier in 1498.

| Half an ager of mede lying in La   | ingley, i | n the parisl | n of T | 'ylehı | ırst, <i>l</i> . | S  | . d. |
|------------------------------------|-----------|--------------|--------|--------|------------------|----|------|
| let to John Wylder of the          | Thele,    | per an.      | ٠.,    | _      | 0                | J  | 1    |
| A tenemente in the est side of the | e Marke   | et-place,    | -      | -      | 0                | 10 | 0    |
| A tenemente in Gutter-lane,        | -         | -            |        |        | 0                | 7  | 7 0  |
|                                    |           |              |        |        |                  |    |      |
|                                    |           | Carried      | forwa  | rd.    | f 0              | 18 | 3 1  |

\* On the south wall, near the pulpit, is a monument representing a book-case or library, in the centre of which is a bust of this gentleman, holding a globe in his right hand, and a sector in his left. Two female figures support the pediment inscribed with the words CUBUS and TETRALDON. On the pediment are two others, inscribed OCTAEDRON and DODECAEDRON, and a fifth, in the centre, is inscribed ICOSAEDRON: being the names of the five regular solids of equal and equilateral triangles. Beneath is the following inscription:

Johannes Blagravius, totus mathematicus, cum matre sepultus.

Obiit 9 Augusti 1611.

Here lies his corps, which living had a spirit,
Wherein all worthy knowledge did inherit,
By which with zeal, our God he did adore,
Left for maid-servants, and to feed the poor.\*
His virtuous mother, came of virtuous race,
A Hungerford, and buried near this place.
When God sent death, their lives away to call,
They lived beloved, and died bewailed of all.

"This gentleman, who was the son of John Blagrave of Bullmarsh-court, in the parish of Sonning, was educated at Reading, and from thence went to St. John's college, Oxon; but did not continue there long, retiring to his estate at Southcote, where he prosecuted his mathematical studies to so considerable an height, that he was esteemed the flower of the mathematicians of his age.

"The following are the principal of his publications:

66 A Mathematical Jewel, shewing the making and most excellent use of an instrument so called, he use of which jewel is so abundant, that it leadeth the direct path way through the whole art of astronomy, cosmography, &c. London, 1585. fol.

"On the Making and Use of the Familiar Staff, so called, as well for that it may be made usually and familiarly to walk with, as for that it performeth the geometrical mensuration of all altitudes.—

London, 1590. quarto.

"Astrolabium Uranicum Generale, a necessary and pleasant solace and recreation, for navigators in their long journeying, containing the use of an instrument or general astrolabe. The first shewing plainly, &c. London, 1609."—Wood's Athena Oxon.

\* See the account of charities.

| CHAP. Brought forward, 0                                          |   | s.<br>18 | d.<br>1 |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------|---|----------|---------|
| A tenemente in the south side of the Newe-street, (Friar-street)  | ) | 10       | 0       |
| A tenemente on the same side,                                     | ) | 4        | 0       |
| A grownde lying in Gutter-lane, C                                 | ) | 4        | 0       |
| Two gardens, lying in the southe side of Lurkman's-lane, (Hosiers |   |          |         |
| lane) let to Henry Sutton, for a yere,                            | ) | 1        | 6       |
| A quit rent of a tenemente set in High-street, -                  | 0 | 1        | 1       |
| A tenemente beside the market, for a yere,                        | 0 | 1        | 0       |
| -                                                                 |   |          | _       |
| £                                                                 | 1 | 19       | 8       |

The last mentioned tenement was taken down at the expense of the corporation, and rebuilt on the piece of ground in Cross-street belonging to the parish, as appears by the following agreement made in 1612:\*

"Upon special considerations, we, the vicar, church-wardens, head burgesses, secondary burgesses, inhabitants, and parishioners of this parish, whose names are subscribed, have agreed, that the mayor and burgesses, within three months, may take down, and remove one messuage, parcel of our church-lands, standing in the market-place in Reading, and the ground where-upon the said messuage now standeth, to convert to their own use for ever; on condition, that within three months after the taking down thereof, they shall, at their own costs, rebuild the said messuage, upon some other convenient ground in the same parish, and make the same sufficient with brick-chimnies and lofts habitable, as now it is, and of so good value to the church, and shall convey the same to the use of the said church for ever, with all which we shall be well contented, &c."

"Memorandum, That it appeareth plainly, that there was a little garden plot lying on the west side of Gutter-lane, which time beyond the memory of man, did belong to St. Lawrence's church; and true it is also, there was a little plot of void ground, enclosed with pales next adjoining to the said church-garden, which did belong to the corporation, and was used for a dunghill, and the soil weekly swept up in the market-place, was carried there by the bailiff, and his servants, and in performance of the above agreement, the said mayor and burgesses did remove the said dwelling-house in the market-place, and made the ground whereon the house did stand, parcel of the market-place, and at their own costs, did build the same house upon the said

<sup>\*</sup> The original deed, signed by the parishioners, is among the archives of the corporation.

garden-plot, and void ground, in Gutter-lane, and made the same of more worth than it was before, for the use of the said church, &c."

CHAP.

| St. Lawrence's terrier in 1783.                                   |    |    |                |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------|----|----|----------------|
| Three messuages in the tenure of the overseers for the accommo-   |    |    |                |
| dation of the poor, with a garden, on the north side of           | £. | 8. | d.             |
| Friar street, per annum,                                          | 1  | 2  | 6              |
| One garden in Hosiers-lane, in the tenure of Thomas Watson,       |    |    |                |
| under a lease; and one messuage, with a garden, on the            |    |    |                |
| south side of Friar-street, in the tenure of the said T.          |    |    |                |
| Watson, on lease, which expires in 1835, -                        | 1  | 13 | 4              |
| One piece of land, whereon stood two tenements, with gardens,     |    |    |                |
| on the south side of Friar-street, under a lease, now in          |    |    |                |
| the occupation of C. Poulton, expires 1835,                       | 0  | 13 | 6              |
| Three messuages, with gardens, on the north side of Friar-street, |    |    |                |
| now in the tenure of S. French,                                   | 2  | 10 | 0              |
| One room over the gate-way leading into the church-yard, and      |    |    |                |
| adjoining the church, in the tenure of James Hawkes,              |    |    |                |
| under lease, expires in 1879,                                     | 0  | 16 | 0              |
| Two tenements on the west side of Gutter-lane, in the tenure      |    |    |                |
| of the rev. John Spicer, under a lease; expires in 1836,          | 3  | 0  | 0              |
| One tenement and a stable on the west side of Gutter-lane, now    |    |    |                |
| in the tenure of Matilda Mayhew, on lease; expires 1836,          | 2  | 0  | 0              |
| Two half acres of meadow in Aston mead, in the tenure of          |    |    |                |
| William May,*                                                     | 0  | 10 | 0              |
| Four tenements on the west side of Horn-street, in the tenure     |    |    |                |
| of Nathaniel Simonds, +                                           | 4  | 0  | 0              |
| A quit-rent of a messuage, on the west side of the Market-place,  |    |    |                |
| in the tenure of Martha Whiting,                                  | 0  | 1  | 0              |
| A quit-rent of a tenement on the north side of Broad street,      |    |    |                |
| in the tenure of Thomas White,                                    | 0  | 1  | $1\frac{1}{2}$ |
| A quit-rent of a messuage on the south side of Friar-street, in   |    |    | _              |
| the tenure of Thomas Halifax,                                     | 0  | 0  | 1              |
| An annual rent for the vault of Richard Curtis, esq. in the       |    |    |                |
| north chancel of this church,                                     | 0  | 6  | 8              |
| <b>£</b>                                                          | 16 | 14 | 2 <u>1</u>     |
| <del>-</del>                                                      | 10 | 11 | 7-2            |

<sup>\*</sup> One of these half acres was given to this church by E. Hamblin, in 16:3. Mr. John Deane sets the rent at one pound per annum.

<sup>†</sup> Out of this the parish pays twenty shillings ground rent to the corporation.

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| In Mr. John Deane's account of the possessions belonging to       | this | par  | ish, |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------|------|------|------|
| the following messuages are added, which do not appear to         | make | part | of   |
| the above terrier:                                                |      |      |      |
| One tenement, on the east side of Cross-street, let to J. Cooper, | £.   | s.   | d.   |
| at will, per annum,                                               | 6    | 6    | 0    |
| One ditto, adjoining, at will,                                    | 6    | 10   | 0    |
| One messuage, on the north side of Friar-street, with land,       |      |      |      |
| bounded by the Vasterns on the north, let on lease for            |      |      |      |
| 9.) years: expires in 1823,                                       | 12   | 0    | 0    |
| of years, expressions                                             |      |      |      |
| £                                                                 | 24   | 16   | 0    |
|                                                                   |      |      |      |

The revenues of this vicarage are small, "there being, (says an entry in the church books) no glebe nor tithes belonging to it, except an occasional tithe pig."

The vicar is entitled to oblations at easter, and all the church-dues, but the principal part of his income ariseth from benefactions, for "\*By an inquisition taken by Edward Plowden, esq. and several other gentlemen of the county of Berks, and returned into the exchequer the 6th and 7th of queen Elizabeth: it sets forth, That the income of the living of St. Lawrence's, before the dissolution of the abbey, arose, by the offerings, &c. of rich clothiers, and officers, and servants of the abbey, by half the offerings to the chapel at Caversham-bridge, and also by dirges, obits, creeping to the cross, and other popish ways; but the most valuable was a horse kept in the abbot's stables, for the vicar to ride to visitations; and wine, and victuals at his table. beside the redundancy of wax for the church, and other lesser contingent emoluments. The commissioners further set forth, that the living, after the abbey was dissolved, was vacant thirteen years, though there were at the time a thousand poor inhabitants in the parish, occasioned by the very high charges upon the living, still subsisting, after it was divested of the means of paying them. There being, in the time of queen Elizabeth, only the easter offerings of the poor inhabitants left, to discharge the debt to the crown for the tenths, subsidies, and the arrears for thirteen years past, besides a pension of five pounds per annum, no man could be found to accept it. The commissioners therefore, recommend, the annexing the parsonage and tythes of several meadows and grounds there set forth to this vicarage. But after this recommendation, no notice is taken in the decree, it only sets forth that queen Eliz-

<sup>\*</sup> MSS. Ancedotes relative to the vicarage of St. Lawrence's, Reading.

abeth, to the intent that an honest man might take upon him the cure, she, by her letters of privy seal, had remitted the debt, and directs, that the living in future be valued in her books at ten pounds only; before it was twenty-seven."

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"Mr. Joel Stevens, who, at the request of Mr. Boudrey, made the above extracts, reports, that the whole decree is very long, consisting of six or seven rolls of parchment wrote on both sides, but thought Mr. Boudry would think it too expensive to have it copied."

"With no other provision excepting a house given by one of the Blagrave family, the vicarage of St. Lawrence remained till archbishop Laud's time, anno 1639, when on the 19th of March, in the fifteenth year of king Charles I. the crown granted the patronage of the living to St. John's college, Oxford."

"Dr. Lloyd was the first fellow presented to St. Lawrence's by the college. In a letter of his to doctor Bailie, the president of St. John's, dated May 17, 1641, the doctor relates, that a Mr. Jennings, then mayor, in testimony of his hearty well willing to the college, purchased and freely annexed to the vicarage during three lives (which was his interest in the property) the garden plot just behind the house. But, for want of a proper provision made for renewing the lives as they dropped, Mr. Jennings's kind benefaction was soon defeated, and the vicars have long since lost their interest, and paid to Mr. Blagrave an annual rack rent for the same."

"That the house was annexed to the vicarage before the year 1580, appears from an old terrier, taken by order of the bishop of Sarum, the ninth of February in that year; and that it was a benefaction of the Blagrave family, seems clear, from a dispute between doctor Lloyd and sir John Blagrave, respecting the boundary of the premises, in which sir John claimed all the ground (excepting the house itself, which he acknowledged his predecessors had given to the church) on the north side of the house. I cannot dismiss this letter of doctor Lloyd, without reciting a peculiar anecdote contained in it."

"I thank God, (says the doctor) that I have health and strength, and am forced to use it. For to come out of the pulpit under an hour and an half, is thought speaking by the glass,\* and not by the spirit."

In 1606, Mr. Thomas Lydall left ten shillings, per annum, to the vicar, for ever.

In 1611, Mr. John Blagrave gave ten shillings, to be paid annually to the vicar, for a sermon to be preached on Good Friday, for ever.

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In 1614, Mr. John Johnson gave ten shillings, annually, for a sermon to be preached by the vicar on the feast of St. John, the evangilist, for ever.

In 1630, Mr. Richard Johnson gave ten shillings, annually; and Mr.

Malthus twenty shillings, for the like purpose.

In 1635, Mr. Roger Knight gave the vicar ten shillings, annually, for a sermon to be preached every new-year's day; and in 1638, Mr. John Bagley gave ten shillings, per annum, to the vicar.

In 1640, archbishop Laud, among other charities, left fifty pounds, per annum, to be paid to the vicar of this parish, out of an estate in the parish of Bray, in this county, vested in the corporation, on condition of his residing

at the living.

In 1726, the rev. Philip Vaughan gave by will to the minister and church-wardens of this parish, and their successors, a rent charge upon an estate at Kate's-grove, of ten pounds, for reading daily the liturgy of the church of England, in this church, in the afternoon. To be paid quarterly. This benefaction however did not take place till lady day, 1781.

Mr. Edward Hungerford left, by will, to the corporation, two hundred pounds, in trust, to pay the interest thereof, for ever, to the vicar of this parish, by half yearly payments, on condition that he, or his curate, shall daily read in this church, between the hours of two and seven in the afternoon, the common prayer of the church of England. Of this legacy, fifty pounds were expended in the erection of a gallery on the north side of this church, the rents whereof are received by the vicar. The remaining one hundred and fifty pounds were laid out in the purchase of one hundred and sixty seven pounds fifteen shillings and eight pence stock, in the old South Sea annuities, producing annually five pounds and eight pence, likewise paid to the vicar.

In 1731, Mr. John Allen left, by will, the sum of one thousand pounds, for the purchase of an estate, for the purpose of several charities therein mentioned, and, among others, to pay one pound four shillings, or according to the present produce, one pound ten shillings, to each of the vicars, annually.

In 1745, Mrs. Haydon gave, in her life time, the sum of one hundred and twenty pounds, for the purchase of one hundred and twelve pounds old South Sea annuities, the interest whereof, three pounds seven shillings and two pence, is divided into five parts, three of which are paid to the vicar for the rent of her vault, and the other two parts are reserved for the repair of the same, when necessary. This money is paid, by the bursar of St. John's college, to the vicar, half yearly.

In 1748, Mrs. Elizabeth Holmes, gave one hundred pounds old South Sea annuities, the interest whereof is paid to the vicar half-yearly, by the bursar of St. John's college, Oxon.

In 1772, Mrs. Elizabeth Thorne gave, by will, the sum of one hundred pounds, which was laid out in the purchase of one hundred and eighteen pound six shillings and ten pence stock, in the old South Sea annuities, producing an annual interest of three pounds eleven shillings, to be paid to the vicar for reading the afternoon prayers.

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In addition to the above gifts, the vicar receives alternately, every third year, twenty shillings, for preaching Mr. West's charity sermon on St. Thomas's-day; and the chamberlain of the corporation pays him for two sermons annually: one at the election of the new mayor, the other on his entrance into office. He is allowed by the parish five shillings for his expenses at the visitation, and one pound six shillings and eight pence annually, in lieu of the herbage growing in the church yard.

The following list of the vicars of this parish is taken from the registers, as they are occasionally mentioned, under the following dates:

| 9 9 9 9 9 9 9 9 9 9 9 9 |            |      |          |      |    | 0              |      |
|-------------------------|------------|------|----------|------|----|----------------|------|
| Rev. Sir John           | Serne,     | r    | -        |      |    |                | 1480 |
| John Ar                 | ndrewe,    | -    |          | -    |    | -              | 1484 |
| Nichola                 | s More,    |      | -        |      | -  |                | 1497 |
| Sir Will                | iam Symn   | ıys, |          | -    |    | -              | 1499 |
| Thomas                  | Justice,   |      | -        |      | -  |                | 1504 |
| John M                  | aynesforth | e,   |          | -    |    | <del>-</del> . | 1529 |
| John Ra                 | adley, -   |      | see .    |      | -  |                | 1551 |
| John Sn                 | nyth,      | •    |          | -    |    | osa .          | 1574 |
| Ch                      | andler,    |      | •        |      | _  |                | 1597 |
| Abrahai                 | m Grey,    | -    |          | -    |    | -              | 1602 |
| John De                 | enison,    |      | -        |      | -  |                | 1603 |
| Theophi                 | lus Taylo  | Γ,   | <b>%</b> |      |    | ·              | 1618 |
| *                       | Lloyd, D   |      | -        |      | -  |                | 1640 |
| Simon F                 | Tord,      | -    |          | -    |    | -              | 1651 |
| Thomas                  |            |      | -        |      | _  |                | 1660 |
| John B                  | rasier,    |      |          | _    |    | pm             | 1671 |
|                         | Hughes,    | ,    |          |      | -  |                | 1679 |
|                         | Bacon,     | -    |          | -    |    | -              | 1690 |
| E. Owe                  |            |      | -        |      | _  |                | 1732 |
|                         | Boudry,    |      |          | **** |    | -              | 1733 |
|                         | Shute, D.  | D.+  | _        |      | _′ |                | 1747 |
|                         |            | ,    |          |      |    |                |      |

<sup>\*</sup> Vide folio 323.

<sup>+</sup> On the south wall of the chancel of this church, on a marble tablet surmounted with a censer, is the following inscription, to the memory of this gentleman: the idea is evidently taken from Pope' lines on Gay. They are, I believe, from the pen of Dr. Merrick:

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| Rev. Jeremiah Nicholson, D. D. | - |   | - | 1763 |
|--------------------------------|---|---|---|------|
| John Nicholls, D. D            |   | - |   | 1772 |
| John Green, -                  | - |   | - | 1788 |
| William Wise,                  |   | - |   | 1812 |

The right of presentation to this living belongs to St. John's college, Oxon. It is valued in the king's books at ten pounds, and the yearly tenths

at one pound.

It is probable the foundation of this church gave rise to the great fair held here annually, on St. Matthew's day: the parish being at the expense of building a booth in the Forbury, and receiving the emoluments arising from the price of admission to the religious plays that were exhibited on such occasions. This appears from the following entries in the church-wardens' accounts for 1507:

|                                                                                         | £.  | s. | d. |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----|----|----|
| "Reced of the sonday afore Bartymass, for the play in the Forbury                       | , 1 | 3  | 8  |
| Item, recd for alder polys, left of the play,                                           | 0   | 0  | 5  |
| Payd for nayles for the sepulchre, and for rosyn for the resur-                         |     |    |    |
| rexyon play,                                                                            | 0   | 2  | 0  |
| Item, payd a carter for carrying of pypys and hogshedds in the                          |     |    |    |
| Forbury,                                                                                | 0   | 0  | 2  |
| Item, payd to the laborers in the Forbury for settyng up of the                         |     |    |    |
| polys for the schaffold,                                                                | 0   | 0  | 9  |
| Item, payd to the ber man for ber for the play in the Forbury,                          | 0   | 0  | 10 |
| Item, payd for 2 ells \( \frac{1}{2} \) of crest cloth, for to mak Eve a cote, \( \* \) | 0   | 0  | 10 |
| Item, for a book of the resurrexyon play,                                               | 0   | 9  | 6" |

#### "THOMAS SHUTE, D. D.

Vicar of this parish, died August 19th, 1763.

Aged 56 years.

If fairest honour, friendship void of art,

And pure religion, captivate the heart,

If virtue fled, demand the silent tear,

And the just man be heaven's peculiar care;

Whoe'er by nicest rules, thy life shall scan,

Must, struck with rev'rence, say, Here lies the man."

<sup>\*</sup> The clergy of the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries were not deterred from acting what were called miracle plays, by considerations which might influence the more demure and decorous churchmen of later ages. They understood the race of men they had to do with. They knew that they might exhibit Eve and the serpent; and God the father, and the Holy Ghost; and Christ and the Devil, on a public stage, without, in the least degree, shocking the passive audiences of these pious days.—Godwin's Life of Chaucer.

On the first of May, plays of another description were represented in the Forbury, in which Robin Hood and his men played the principal parts, and were afterwards entertained in the church,\* with the profits arising from the exhibition,† as we find by the following entries in the parish registers.

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#### Anno 1499.

| " Reced for the gathering of the May-play, called Robin Hood, # | €. | s. | d. |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------|----|----|----|
| on the fair day,                                                | 0  | 19 | 0  |
| Payde for a cote for Robin Hood,                                | 0  | 5  | 4  |
| Item, for a supper to Robin Hood and his company when he        |    |    |    |
| came from Fynchhamsted,                                         | 0  | I  | 6  |
| Item, for makyng clene the church against the day of drynkyng   |    |    |    |
| in the said church,                                             | 0  | 0  | 4  |
| Item for flesh, spyce, and baking of pastyes, against the said  |    |    |    |
| drynkyng,                                                       | 0  | 2  | 9  |
| Item, for ale, at the same drynkyng,                            | 0  | 1  | 6  |
| Item, for horse-meat to the horses for the king of Coley, son   |    |    |    |
| may day,                                                        | 0  | 0  | 6  |

#### \* This was called a church-ale.

† In the month of May, the citizens of London of all estates, lightly in every parish, or sometimes two or three parishes joining together, had their several mayings, and did fetch in may-poles, with divers warlike shews, with good archers, morrice dancers, and other devices, for pastime all the day long, and towards the evening they had stage plays and bonefires in the streets. These great mayings and may-games, were made by the governors and masters of the city, with the triumphant setting up of the great shaft, or principal may-pole, in Cornhill, before the parish church of St. Andrew, therefore called St. Andrew Undershaft.——Stowe.

‡ Among the plays in the Garrick collection, is one on the Death of Robert earle of Huntington, otherwise called Robin Hood, of merrie Sherwodde, with the lamentable Tragedye of chaste Matilda, his faire Maid Marian, poysoned at Dunmowe by king John. Imprinted, at London, in 1601.—Beloe's Anecdotes of Literature.

The first reformers were most zealous adversaries of these pageants, which they regarded as shreds and relics of popery. Bishop Latimer relates the following incident respecting them, in one of his sermons preached before Edward VI. "Coming to a certain town on a holiday to preach, I found the church-door fast locked; I tarried there half an hour and more, and at last the key was found, and one of the parishioners comes to me, and says, 'Syr, this is a busy day with us, we cannot hear you; it is Robin Hood's day, the parish are gone abroad to gather for Robin Hood; I pray you let them not.' I thought my rochet would have been regarded, but it would not serve, it was fain to give place to Robin Hood and his men."—Latimer's Sermons.

§ Mr. Coates seems at a loss to account for the origin of this title; but supposes it to mean the kings of Colen, in allusion to the three kings supposed to be buried at Cologne, in Germany: but, I rather think this king of Coley, was the person who, this year, won the prize at shooting at the

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XVI.

Item, for liverys on our fair day,

- 0 1 4

Anno 1531.

Item, for fyve ells of canvas for a cote for Maid Maryon,\* at 3d. ob. 0 1 61/4

There are also charges for hats and bells for the morrice dancers, and hobby horses, which made a part of the pageantry exhibited under the sanction of religion, intended, no doubt, by the concourse of people brought together on these occasions, to promote the interest of the church.

butts, and therefore called the king, with the addition of the place of his residence. This custom is still observed in Flanders, where, at the annual shooting matches with bows and arrows, the person who wins the prize, has the title of king for the following year, with the name of the society or place to which he belongs, and is, for that year, exempt from taxes.—He was, probably, the lord of misrule, mentioned in the following note.

\* Among the pageants exhibited at this festival, was one from the ancient story of Robin Hood. He presided as Lord of the May, and a woman, or probably a man equipped as a woman, represented Maid Marian, his faithful mistress, and was stiled Lady of the May. Robin Hood was regularly followed by the most noted characters among his attendants appropriately habited, together with a large band of outlaws in coats of green. First of all, "the wilde trades of the parish flockynge together chuse them a graund captayne of myschief, whom they innoble with the title of Lord of misrule, and hym they crowne with great solemnytye, and adopt for their kynge. The kynge announted chuseth forthe twentye, fortye, three score, or an hundred lyke hymself, to waite upon his lordlie majestie, and to guarde hys noble person. Then everie one of these men, he investeth with his liveries of green, yellow, or some other light, wanton colour, and as though they were not gawdie enough, they bedecke themselves with scarffs, ribbons, and laces, hanged all over with gold ryngs, precious stones, and other jewels. This done, they tie about either legge twentie or fortie belles, with rich handkerchiefs in their hands, and sometimes laid across over their shoulders and necks. Thus, all thyngs set in order, then they have their hobbie horses, their dragons, and other anticks, together with their bawdie pypers, and thundryng drummers to strike the devils daunce withall. Then march this heathen companie towards the church, theyr pypers pypyng, theyr drummers thundryng, their belles jynglyng, their handkerchiefs fluttervng about, their heads lyke mad men; their hobbie horses and other monsters skyrmyshyng amongst the throng: and in this sorte, they go to the church dauncyng and syngyng, with such a confused noise, that no man can heare hys own voyce. And thus these terrestryal furyes spend the sabbath daie. Then they have certaine papers wherein is paynted some babelerie, or other, of imagerie work, and these they call my lorde of misrule's badges, or cognizances. These they give to everie one that will give them money to mayntayn them in their heathenysh devilerie; and who will not shew hymselfe buxome to them, and give them monic, they shall be mocked and flouted shamefullie; yea and manie tymes carried upon a cowlstaffe, and dived over head and ears in water, or otherwise most horriblicabused."-Stubbs anatomic of abuses.

## St. Giles's Parish and Church.

#### CHAPTER XVII.

THE parish of St. Giles, including the hamlet of Whitley, is of greater extent than either of the other parishes, but the population is nearly the same. It is situated on the south side of the river Kennet, and is connected with the other parishes by the High-bridge, and Seven-bridges. There are two small islands belonging to this parish on the river Kennet, that on the west side of High-bridge, is separated from St. Lawrence's parish by a water-course branching out above the pound lock, which, after passing under the north end of the Bear inn, takes the name of the Back-ditch, and re-enters the Kennet on the north-east end of the Island. The other commences at the above-mentioned lock, and extends easterly as far as the mill; it is divided from the main land on the north by the navigable branch of the river, and on the south by the mill-stream. These islands are very commodious for wharfs, but they have not hitherto been so much appropriated to that use as might have been expected from the great demand for such places in every part of the town.

The church is situated on a small rising ground on the east side of Hornstreet, but the time of its erection cannot now be ascertained, as the records of the church-wardens of this parish, commence only in the year 1518, which must have been considerably posterior to its first erection. It is large, and built in the usual form of our ancient religious edifices, with a nave and side aisles, divided by arches supported by massive pillars, but without any ornaments to recommend them to the notice of the spectator. From the great lapse of time since its erection, it was a few years ago considered to be in a very dangerous state, from the pillars, which supported the roof on the north side, being observed to have declined very considerably from their original perpendicular direction. This occasioned the parish to be at a very considerable expense to put them into a condition to support the roof with safety a few years longer; but, as this could only be done by easing the weaker parts,

CHAP. XVII. CHAP. XVII. it is doubtful whether this mode has not rather concealed the danger than removed it; and perhaps it would have been more prudent to have taken the whole down and re-built it, than to have waited to a period, which cannot be far distant, when it must be done at an additional expense.

In 1784 a handsome gallery was built, by subscription, for the accommodation of the parishioners, the church having previously been very much crowded by strangers from the other parishes, and even from the country, who flocked thither in great numbers, to hear the late rev. W. B. Cadogan, then vicar of this parish.

The chancel is very small in proportion to the size of the church, and has only a few triffing monuments in it.

The tower, at the west end, was originally square, like those of the other churches, with pinnacles at the four corners, and so continued prior to the civil wars in the reign of Charles I. but during the siege of the town by the parliament's forces, in 1643, the king's soldiers having placed a piece of ordnance on the tower, it so much annoyed the besiegers, that they raised a battery against it, and soon reduced it to a heap of rubbish. After the siege it was rebuilt in its present form, with the materials taken from the ruins, in the coarsest manner possible. When the body of the church was repaired as above mentioned, it was thought necessary to improve the appearance of the tower, and accordingly some parts of it were cased with stone, and the rest stuccoed; the top was ornamented with battlements, and a light spire of wood, lined with copper, erected in the centre, and a gothic porch added to the west entrance.

An eight o'clock bell was formerly rung every evening at this church, but, on the decline of the woollen manufactory, that custom was omitted in this parish; an additional proof, that whatever was its origin, it could not be the pretended curfew established by king William. When the tower was repaired, it was found necessary to reduce the number of bells to seven, it being considered incapable of supporting a greater weight.

During the papal hierarchy, this church possessed four images for religious worship, viz. St. Christopher, St. Mary, St. John, and its patron St. Giles. There were also two altars: the high altar on which was the crucifix\* and St. John's altar; these, with the images, were removed at the reformation, in order to introduce a form of worship more congenial to the new opinions, and better calculated to promote that which ought to be the chief and end of all religions—the reforming the habits and mending the morals of the people.

<sup>\*</sup> In the churchwardens' book for 1557, is a charge of forty shillings "for making a rood with Mary and John, and for making the patron of our church."

Music being next to show and pageantry, one of the greatest instruments of papal superstition, it is no wonder if we find all their churches furnished with one or more organs, or, as they were then called, pair of organs, to increase the solemnity of the church service. There is an entry in the church-wardens accounts of this parish, in 1519, of nine pounds, paid for a pair of organs, at which time the salary of the organist was only three shillings and four pence, per annum, an instance of the great value of circulating coin at this period, and of the high price of the instrument compared with those of the present time.

CHAP.

We have already noticed the early introduction of church clocks into this town, and it is probable that this parish was one of the first to adopt this useful instrument for the division of time, as mention is made of a clock, in the first year of the church register, commencing in 1518, and may therefore be considered as existing prior to that era. I do not know at what time musical chimes were first added to the striking parts of clocks, but it appears, from an entry in the parish books, that this clock was furnished with a set of chimes, in this early stage of the invention.

Although the church stands on an eminence, yet the ground has so accumulated round the side walls, from the earth excavated from vaults and brick graves, that the floor within has become considerably below the surface of the ground on the outside; this therefore ought to be removed, so as to reduce it to the original level, which would greatly contribute towards freeing the body of the church from those pestilential effluvia, the natural consequences of damp and mouldy walls, and render it more healthy for those, who weekly attend there for the performance of their religious duties.

The church-yard was inclosed with brick walls at different periods; those on the north and east sides were built in 1622, but that on the west side next the high road, was of an earlier date, as we find a charge in 1592, for strengthening that part with buttresses; these remained entire till a few years back, when it was found necessary to remove them for the sake of widening the road, by cutting off a part of the church-yard, which before jutted very considerably into it, and carrying the foot path as near as possible in a line with the houses: this part has since been enclosed with a handsome iron railing. The expense of this improvement was defrayed by a general subscription among all the inhabitants of the town, who rightly considered that whatever embellishments are made in either of the parishes, tends equally to the pleasure and convenience of the whole body of the inhabitants.

There are no remains of antiquity in this parish; neither does it appear that there were ever any religious foundations in it: the only monument CHAP.

mentioned in the parish books, was a cross erected in London-street, but this was destroyed in 1549 by the reformers, whose over abundant zeal destroyed many works of art, and even of literature, which might otherwise have delighted and improved their descendants of the present day.

During the papal hierarchy, sanctuaries were attached to many of our churches, and scarcely any town of consequence was without one of these places of refuge, from whence malefactors of every description could bid defiance to the laws with impunity; and so sacred were those receptacles considered at the time, that no one, not even the monarch on the throne, dared to violate them, however tyrannical in disposition and conduct towards his subjects on other occasions. One of those places, and probably united to the privileges of this church, was, in what is now called the Crown-lane; how far it extended, is uncertain, but it is not unlikely that it included the whole space between that lane and the church-yard.

## Copy of an ancient rent-roll of this parish, taken in 1518.

| QUIT-RENTS.                                                        | 8. | d. |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------|----|----|
| " For a tenement on the west side of London-street, for a year,    | 0  | I  |
| Do. on the same side, between Mill-lane on the north side, and the |    |    |
| tenement of T. Pockerige on the south side,                        | 0  | 6  |
| The tenement annexed,                                              | 0  | 6  |
| A tenement on the same side,                                       | 1  | 0  |
| A tenement on the same side,                                       | 0  | 3  |
| A tenement on the same side,                                       | 1  | 6  |
| Do. next to the tenement of the abbot and convent of Reading,      | 1  | 3  |
| Do. annexed, now in the hands of the churchwardens, -              | 0  | 2  |
| A tenement on the same side next to the void ground of the abbot   |    |    |
| and convent,                                                       | 0  | 2  |
| A tenement on the same side,                                       | 0  | 2  |
| A tenement on the west side of Syvear-street,                      | 0  | 6  |
| The ground annexed, late a tenement,                               | 0  | 8  |
| A tenement, on the same side,                                      | 0  | 2  |
| A tenement on the east side of London-street next the tenement     |    |    |
| of the abbot and convent,                                          | 0  | 3  |
| A tenement on the same side, next the tenements of the abbot and   |    |    |
| convent, on the north and south,                                   | 0  | 1  |
|                                                                    |    |    |
| Carried forward s.                                                 | 7  | 3  |

# \* This is not reconcilable with the situation of this street, unless we suppose it to have been at the east end of Crown-lane.

Carried forward

A tenement on the west side of the same street,

A tenement on the same side,

0

0

| Brought up                                                        | €        | 1 | 4  | 2  |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------|----------|---|----|----|
| CHAP. XVII. Of W. Greene, the priest, for a tenement, on the west | side of  |   |    |    |
| London-street,                                                    |          | 0 | 8  | 0  |
| A tenement on the same side, next the tenement belong             | ging to  |   |    |    |
| the alms house,                                                   | -        | 0 | 8  | 0  |
| For certain tenements on the same side, called The Rents          | ,        | 1 | 0  | 0  |
| For a tenement on the west side of the Olde-street,               |          | 0 | 4  | 0  |
| For a tenement annexed, and joining to the ground cal             | lled the |   |    |    |
| Gravel pit,                                                       | •        | 0 | 7  | 0  |
| A tenement on the east side of the Olde-street, between           | een the  |   |    |    |
| ground of the vicarage on the north, and a tenen                  | nent on  |   |    |    |
| the south,                                                        |          | 0 | 10 | 6  |
|                                                                   |          | - |    |    |
|                                                                   | £        | 4 | 1  | 8" |
|                                                                   |          |   |    |    |

The frequent mention of tenements belonging to the abbot and convent, accounts for the very small proportion of freehold estates within the town; all their possessions, having devolved to the crown at the dissolution, and are now let on three lives.

In consequence of an act passed in the 39th of queen Elizabeth, entitled, "an act to reform deceits and breeches of trust touching lands, given to charitable uses," commissioners were appointed to enquire, by a jury, what lands, tenements, leases, goods, chattels, and sums of money, or other things, had, at any time before, been given by any persons to and for the relief and maintenance of the poor, within the county of Berks; and whether they had been employed according to the meaning of the founders. This commission was held at Newbury in 1599, when the jurors returned the following presentment\* to this parish:

"That before all the memory of man, there were given and conveyed to certain persons, whose names the jurors do not know, divers messuages, lands, tenements, rents, and hereditaments, within the borough of Reading, that is to say, one messuage divided into two dwellings, with a backside and garden thereunto adjoining, situate on the east side of London-street, in Reading aforesaid, and now in the several tenures of W. Malthus, and H. Walker. Two capital messuages adjoining together, on the west side of the

<sup>\*</sup> Now among the records of the parish.

said London-street, in the several tenures of R. Green and J. West, with an inner court, wherein is made and contained, divers small dwelling places, inhabited by poor people, and thereunto, likewise, a backside belonging, now divided into small gardens, all which last mentioned dwelling places, and gardens, are now commonly called the Church New-rents. One messuage with a backside and garden adjoining, situate on the west side of the said London-street, and now in the tenure of J. Mafforly. One messuage, with a backside and garden adjoining, situate on the west side of the said Londonstreet, and now in the tenure of J. Spurrier. Two messuages adjoining together; with each of them a backside adjoining, and now in the tenures of Edmond Surman, and Nicholas Burge, and situate on the west part of the street, called Sivyer-street. One messuage with a backside adjoining, on the east side of the said Sivyer-street, and now in the tenure of Katherine Burge, widow. One messuage, with a backside and garden adjoining, situate on the east side of the said Sivyer-street, and now in the tenure of W. Netherclif. One messuage, with a backside and garden adjoining, situate on the east side of Horn-street, otherwise Oulde street, upon the hill on the south side of St. Giles's church, and now in the tenure of Alice Bedford, widow. One messuage, with a backside and garden adjoining, situate on the hill, on the west side of the said Horn-street, and now in the tenure of J. Mufferlye. One annual rent of a penny, payable out of the messuage now in the tenure of Walter Bye, and situate on the west side of London-street, near the Highbridge. One annual rent of twelve pence, payable out of the messuage now in the tenure of Stephen Harris, and situate at the mill-lock, called St. Giles's mill-lock, on the west side thereof. One annual rent of six-pence, out of the messuage, now in the tenure of T. Lane, and situate on the east side of Hornstreet, near the Seven-bridges. One annual rent of two shillings, out of the messuage now in the tenure of T. Turner, and situate on the west side of London-street. One annual rent of sixpence, out of the messuage now in the tenure of T. Kenton, and situate on the west side of London-street. One annual rent of one penny, out of the messuage now in the tenure of T. Deane, and situate on the west side of Horn-street. One annual rent of sixpence, out of the messuage now in the tenure of Gideon Collet, and situate on the west side of London-street. One annual rent of twelve pence, out of the messuage now in the tenure of G. Thorne, and situate on the west side of Londonstreet. One annual rent of three shillings, out of the messuage in the tenure of T. Awborne, situate on the west side of London-street. One annual rent of eighteen pence, out of the messuage now in the tenure of Alexander Pyther, situate on the west side of London-street. One annual rent of fifteen





pence, out of the messuage now in the tenure of - Conway, widow, and situate on the west-side of London-street. One annual rent of two-pence, out of divers messuages now in the tenure of W. Rowse, and situate on the west side of London-street. One annual rent of two pence, out of the messuage now in the tenure of J. Aylarde, and situate on the west side of London-street. One annual rent of one penny, out of the messuage now in the tenure of Martin Russel, and situate on the east side of London-street. One annual rent of one penny, out of the messuage now in the tenure of Wm. Attwater, and situate on the cast side of London-sircet. One annual rent of one penny, out of the messuage now in the tenure of T. Hedde, situate on the east side of London-street. One annual rent of sixpence, out of the messuage now in the tenure of R. Tenche, called the Hind's-head, and situate on the east side of London-street. One annual rent of two pence, out of the messuage now in the tenure of J. Mullins, situate on the east side of Londonstreet. One annual rent of eight pence, out of the messuage, and barn now in the tenure of R. Watlington, and L. Yorke, and situate on the west side of Sivver-street. One annual rent of sixpence, payable out of the messuage now in the tenure of P. Lavander, and situate on the west side of Sivyer-street. The intent of which gifts was, that the rents and profits thereof should be, from time to time, employed to these good and charitable uses following: that is, towards the reparation of the church of St Giles, the maintenance of the bells, and seats there, and the overplus to the relief of the poor of the said parish. And the said messuages, and rents, and premises, have been called and known by the name of the Church-lands, by all the time whereof the memory of man is not to the contrary, and are now so called, and the same charitable uses, by all the time whereof the memory of man is not to the contrary, have been from time to time put in use, and executed, with the said rents and profits, without any interruption, until of late, one Jeffery Cowper, gent. late of the said parish, and sometimes churchwarden there, did pretend, that the said messuages, lands, tenements, rents, and hereditaments, were concealed from the queen's majesty, and procured them, or some part of them, to be passed, as concealed from her majesty, in a book of concealed lands; and so to be afterwards conveyed to himself, of purpose to defraud the said charitable uses, and make undue gain to himself; and upon the said pretence, and title, the said Cowper has claimed the same as his own, and threatened suit for the same. And the said jurors say further, that many of the evidences that should prove the gifts of the said lands, and the charitable uses, have been of late embezzled away, and taken out of a chest standing in a room called the vestry, within the said church of St. Giles, but by whom they know not."

Orders and decrees, made and established at Newbury, in the county of Berks, the 18th day of April, in the 41st year of her majesty's reign, by sir Humfrey Foster, kt. &c. in virtue of the commission, &c.

CHAP. XVII.

"First, the said commissioners do order and decree, that the lands, tenements, and hereditaments, in the said inquisition mentioned to be called by the name of the Church-lands of St. Giles's church in Reading, and found, and presented, to have been given, to the intent the rents and profits should be applied towards the repair of the said church of St. Giles, in Reading, the maintenance of the bells and seats there, and the surplus towards the relief of the poor of the said parish, shall for ever hereafter be, remain, continue, and be employed to the same uses, and to none other.

"And, for as much as it appeareth to the said commissioners, by the examination of witnesses, sight of leases, and counterpart of leases, and views of the ancient register book of the said church, that the churchwardens of the said parish and church have used, by all the time whereof the memory of man is not to the contrary, to demise, and let to farm, the said lands, tenements, and hereditaments, and receive, employ, and bestow, the rents, issues, and profits thereof, as owners of the same; and no other but the said churchwardens, have intermeddled therewith, whereby the said commissioners are of opinion, that the said churchwardens are a corporation by prescription capable of estates of lands, to the said church, as well as goods.

"Therefore the said commissioners do further order and decree, that the said lands, tenements, and hereditaments, shall, for ever hereafter, be, continue and remain, in the churchwardens, and their successors; and that the said churchwardens and their successors, shall not make any lease, or demise of the same, or any part thereof, for any greater, or further time, than for one-and-twenty years, in possession, and not in reversion, and shall accompt for the fines, rents, issues, and profits thereof, yearly, for ever, at such times as here-tofore they have accustomed, before the parishioners of the said church.

"And further, that the said churchwardens shall not make the lease, or demise, of any part, or parcel thereof, to any person whatsoever, without the consent, and agreement of the head burgesses and second burgesses of the said borough of Reading, within the said parish, or the greater number of them; the same consent, together with the brief contents of the fine, rents, conditions, and covenants of the same demise, to be first entered in the register book of the said parish, and the same demise to be made by indenture, whereof the counterpart shall remain, amongst other the evidences of the said lands, in a chest to be provided for that purpose.



"And, for the better continuance of the said good and charitable uses, and intents, the said commissioners do further order and decree, that in case the said churchwardens, or any of them, shall refuse to accompt for the said issues and profits, or being found in arrearages upon their accompts, shall not pay the same to the next new chosen churchwardens, within three days after the same account, or shall be found obstinate, wilful, or negligent, in employing or bestowing the issues and profits of the said lands, tenements, and here-ditaments, in manner and form as is before limited, that then it shall and may be lawful, for the mayor of the said borough for the time being, upon complaint of the greater number of head burgesses, and secondary burgesses of the said parish, to commit to prison every such person so offending, until payment of the said arrearages, and the reformation and satisfaction of any such of the said abuses wherein he shall be found to offend."

The revenues of the vicarage arise chiefly from the great and small tythes of the lands within the parish and hamlet of Whitley, a very small proportion only of the original possessions of the abbey being tithe free. The vicar is also entitled to easter offerings, surplice fees, &c. but it does not appear that there is any glebe belonging to the parish except the parsonage house and garden. The presentation to the living is in the lord chancellor: in the king's books it is valued at 14l. 17s.  $3\frac{1}{2}d$ . and the yearly tenths at 1l. 9s.  $8\frac{3}{4}d$ .

List of vicars from the parish registers under the following dates:

|                     |   |   |     |    | anno. |
|---------------------|---|---|-----|----|-------|
| Rev. John More, -   | - |   | -   |    | 1540  |
| —— Emery, -         |   | • |     | -  | 1548  |
| William Webb,       | - |   | -   |    | 1551  |
| Edward Young, -     |   | - |     | •• | 1572  |
| — Martin, D. D.     | - |   | -   |    | 1600  |
| William Burton, -   |   | - |     | -  | 1605  |
| John Denison, A. M. | - |   | 100 |    | 1612  |

This gentleman was successively vicar of all the three parishes. He was cried up, says Wood, "for an eminent preacher, became a student in Baliol college; in 1590, took the degree of A. M. and was made chaplain to king James I; chief moderator of the free school at Reading, and at length vicar of St. Mary's, there. In which last he was succeeded by Thomas Bunbury of Baliol college, but thrust out thence by the presbyterians, in the beginning of the civil wars. Denison was a learned man, well read in theological authors, and published many works on those subjects."

| Rev. Samuel Ratcliffe, - | - |   | - | anno.<br>1614 | Снар.<br>XVII. |
|--------------------------|---|---|---|---------------|----------------|
| Hugh Dicas,              |   | - |   | 1616          | ~~             |
| William Wilde, D. C. L.  | - |   | - | 1643          |                |

Wood calls him George Wilde, and adds, "he was chaplain to archbishop Laud, and vicar of St. Giles,' when the civil wars broke out. In the heat of the rebellion, he adhered to his majesty, was an appointed preacher before him, and the parliament at Oxford, and, for his eloquent preaching, had the degree of D. C. L. conferred upon him. Afterwards, being turned out of his fellowship, by the parliamentarian visitors in 1648, he suffered much, yet kept up a religious meeting for the loyalists in Fleet-street, London. At the restoration, he was, in requital for his loyalty, made bishop of Londonderry, in Ireland, where he was much esteemed. In his younger years, he was accounted a man of great ingenuity, and in his elder, of singular prudence, and a grace to the pulpit. He wrote the 'Hospital of Lovers,' a comedy, and acted in St. John's college refectory, before the king and queen, on the 30th of August. 1636, but was not printed; as also 'Hermoplus,' a comedy, written in Latin, several times acted, but not printed. And also a sermon, preached on the 3d of March 1643, before the house of commons; and several other things. He died at Dublin 29th of December 1665, and was buried in Christ's church there.

Rev. William Jemmatt, - - 1648

"William Jemmatt," or according to Wood, Gemote, "was born in the borough of Reading, of which his father had been twice mayor,\* in the reign of Elizabeth, and educated in the free school there, became a student in Magdalen college, in 1610; and preacher at Letchlade, in Gloucestershire. Afterwards he was made minister of Nettlestead, in Kent, chaplain to the earl of Northumberland, and for fourteen years a licensed lecturer of Isleworth, in Middlesex; at length, leaving that cure in 1640, or thereabout, he went to his native place, exercised his function, in praying and preaching there among the brethren, took the covenant, became minister of St. Giles's, and was much followed, and admired, by those of his persuasion. He published a great many works, but chiefly on religious subjects. At length, after he had shewed himself a mutable man, according to the times he lived in, he died full of years, on the 28th of January 1677, at which time he left a considerable legacy of books to the said church of St. Giles, in the chancel whereof he was buried, on the 31st of the same month. He had two sons that were ministers, one

<sup>\*</sup> This is evidently a mistake, as no such name occurs in the list of mayors.

CHAP. XVII. named John, who was vicar of the said church, and the other Samuel, who lived and died rector of Eastling, in Kent."

From his being called, by Wood, "a mutable man," it is very probable that he conformed again, at the restoration, to the established church, and, in consequence, was permitted to hold the living till his death, and was then succeeded by his son John, as mentioned above, who probably died about the year 1685, as at this period we find the vicar to have been William Richards, A. M. afterwards archdeacon of Berks. Mr. Coates places this last, according to the register, in 1676, the year before the elder Jemmatt died; which cannot be correct, especially if his son John succeeded him in the living, as Wood says, and which assertion is corroborated by the parish register of burials.

|                            |          |   | anno.               |
|----------------------------|----------|---|---------------------|
| Rev. Samuel Torrent, M. A. | -        |   | 1712                |
| Whiting Colton, M. A.      | -        | - | 1729                |
| The Hon. Joseph Yorke,     | ~        |   | 1756 exchanged with |
| William Talbot, A. M.      | -        | - | 1768                |
| The Hon. William Bromley   | Cadogan, |   | 1775                |
| Joseph Eyre, A. M.         | -        | - | 1797                |

## The Corporation.

#### CHAPTER XVIII.

READING being, as we have before observed, a borough by prescription, it is impossible to assign the precise period, when it assumed the form of a corporate body; but it is probable, that it was soon after, if not prior to the foundation of the abbey, which, no doubt, caused a rapid increase to the town by the number of tradespeople this establishment must have attracted from other parts of the country. Those of this useful class of people, who first established themselves here, and who made up the aggregate of the inhabitants, soon grew jealous of the intrusion of others, and conceiving, perhaps, that they had an exclusive right to the advantages arising from their situation, were desirous, as much as possible, to prevent all others from partaking with them, but as this could not effectually be done while they continued separate and unconnected, they formed themselves into a society which they denominated the guild merchant, over which one of their own members was annually appointed to preside, whom they stiled the master of the guild. Such was, probably, the origin of the corporation; but, as this society was constituted without the authority of the crown, its powers must have been confined to the making of by-laws only, for the regulation of their own mercantile concerns, without any civil jurisdiction over the borough, which was originally vested in the abbots, as will be shewn hereafter. At present we shall endeavor to trace the rise and progress of the corporation, from this feeble beginning to its being perfected by the charter of Charles I.

It has already been shewn, that the original corporation, if it may be so called, was nothing more than a society of mechanics and tradesmen, formed into one body, called the guild-merchant, for the mutual advantage of all its members, without pretending to interfere in the government of the borough. That this was all they aimed at in their association, is evident, from the first charter they obtained from the crown, dated the 37th of Henry III. nearly two centuries later than the charter granted to the abbot and monks by Henry I. By this charter they obtained certain privileges and exemptions for the benefit of trade, but no civil jurisdiction over the town, as appears from the following copy, taken from the town records:

XVIII.

CHAP. XVIII.

of England and France, and lord of Ireland, to all archbishops, bishops, abbots, priors, earls, barons, justices, viscounts, governors, magistrates, and to all our bailiffs, and faithful subjects, greeting.

WE have inspected a charter, which the lord Henry of celebrated memory, formerly king of England, our progenitor, made, in these words:

" henry, by the grace of God, king of England, lord of Ireland, duke of Normandy, of Acquitaine, and carl of Anjou; to all archbishops, bishops, abbots, priors, earls, barons, justices, viscounts, governors, magistrates, and to all our bailiffs, and faithful subjects, greeting. Know ve, that we will, and command for ourself and our heirs, that all the burgesses of Radinge who belong to the guild-merchant in Radinge, may be for ever free from all shires and hundred courts, and from all pleas, (placitis) complaints, tolls, passages, ways, and carriage ways, and that they may buy and sell wheresoever they will, throughout all England, without paying toll, and no one may disturb them under forfeiture of ten marks. Witness to these presents, the venerable father the archbishop of Canterbury, primate of all England, Richd earl of Cornwall our brother, Peter de Malund, Richard Fitznicholas, Bertram de Croill, John de Grey, Master William de Kilkenney archdeacon of Coventry, Henry de Wengh, Henry de Bathon, Robert Walerand, William de Grey, Nicholas de St. Maure, Imbert Pugevs, William Gerum, Roger de Bovin, and others. Given under our hand, at Portsmouth, the fifth day of July, in the 37th year of our reign.

"Now we grant and confirm the above charter, with its contents, to the burgesses of the aforesaid town, their heirs, and successors, being burgesses of the said town, for us and our heirs, so far as the above charter reasonably witnesses; and in like manner as the same burgesses and their predecessors have hitherto used and enjoyed, by these words above mentioned, that is to say, that the said burgesses may be undisturbed in every thing, pleas (placitis)+ only excepted.

"Witnesses to these presents, the venerable fathers, John, archbishop of Canterbury, primate of all England, Richard of London, Richard of Chichester, bishops; William de Bohun earl of Nerthau.pton, Thomas de Bello-

#### \* Edward III.

<sup>+</sup> Plucita does in part signify pecuniary matters, such as fines and amercements; but they were also fines and amercements set or entered into upon the occasion, or ground of pleas depending.

Man. ox's History and Antiquities of the Exch quer, p. 142.

Prayons der gra kel ng ta pe atous priority commits Bajoned Information of the priority commits Bajoned Information of the priority of comes and the priority preparate of the priority priority of the primate has committed or the primate has committed or the primate has some and priority of primate has some and priority of primate has some and priority of the some of the primate has the priority of the primate priority of the primate priority of the primate priority of the primate priority of the priority of the primate priority of the primate priority of the priorit

CHAP. XVIII.

1345

1379

By paloue ger du for full franc's Domine April proble Sunder Sombre Dullius flocht fair Alutem Infigennus taytum quam alebra memore dus Do guondam Fey Quat poenter in feat in het refla Denpicus Ser Ma Desduct dus Hibrone Lorin Agust of The Country of The milyfutic vicecounting prepotets countries to out wallhus & field it fine outton Scattes of pantona in taking wifom quietisant de Abyus thindedis to out plans qui ount in outer Mous & appayus & vendant & cuant volicings volugint p totam angt one thelou of nathis Maybe Tip for forman wan seem librar Pus soft of weather to D. cantuage Of these and anot primate how countre-count fix up perfo do walland rad fit with befind to mobaldyand Ditto & Theo & with so soo wang Justro progres Sillo venning troop who the policy of the progression of the sound the sound of the sound the sound of Smallitt toffatuy it put wen Dygenses it ear anterespees littatul ills nactours Bua of sint & saudi hus ish's suprus dimotans wat or set Wygenes quiet surt to omit londing of the fit willow Dollan Courte Porbamoton Thomas well o raingo muto but officer will be so the frast so raffer reneffect sofercy up thus that win wan apus Boffin sociais des Juny Anno gegin in Ange Secuno scharo fegin sego me my quinto. & from ging majery - Dijorton (Pert 1 1 jou sends of the Charles of Lunding 1315

campo earl of Warwick, Thomas Wake de Lydell, Richard de Stafford stew- CHAP. ard of our houshold, and others.

XVIII.

"Given under our hand at Westminster the tenth day of June, in the eighteenth year of our reign over England, and in the fourth over France."

It is probable that our ancestors, either considered these charters as no longer in force after the demise of the grantor, or, as is more likely, that they were compelled to renew them when called upon for that purpose by the reigning monarch, as is evident from this charter of confirmation of Edward III. whereby instead of obtaining any fresh immunities, they are curtailed of some they before enjoyed, which could not have been the desire of the guild merchant in renewing their former charter. So, in the succeeding one of Richard II. no other object appears to account for its confirmation of the former ones, as it merely recites them, verbatim, and then adds, " We grant and confirm the aforesaid charter and confirmation, with all that is contained therein, except as is therein excepted, and for ourselves and our heirs, as far as in us is, to the burgesses of the aforesaid town of Readinge, and to their heirs, burgesses of the said town, we accept, approve, ratify, and confirm the same, as far as they may reasonably require, and like as the said burgesses and their predecessors have hitherto reasonably used and enjoyed. In witness whereof we have caused these our letters to be made patent. Witness myself at Westminster the twentieth day of February, in the second year of our reign. " BONLAND."

1345

1379

At the bottom, in a smaller hand, is written " for a fine of five marks."\* By these charters, called charters by inspeximus, from their leading word. the guild-merchant became a privileged but not an executive government; they were in some instances exempt from other courts, but possessed none of their own: and, though they were authorized to buy and sell wherever they pleased without paying toll, they were not till long after permitted to levy that small tribute in their own market.

These charters were renewed by Henry IV. in 1399, and by Henry V. in 1418. Hitherto the chief magistrate was only considered as the keeper or master of the guild-merchant, but, by the charter granted in the following reign, (Henry VI.) he is styled the mayor; the body corporate being therein called the mayor and burgesses, and so it continued and was confirmed by the

Hume observes, "that the fines paid for the renewal of charters, being a part of the revenues of the crown, under the Norman race, the subjects were obliged to renew them at the commencement of every new reign."

CHAP. subsequent charters of Henry VII. Henry VIII. and Edward VI. but in that XVIII. granted by queen Elizabeth, in the second year of her reign, who very much favored the town, the burgesses were, for the first time, divided into capital and secondary, consisting of nine of the former, and sixteen of the latter, "and the mayor, primary and secondary burgesses were to be a common council for the borough, for all things and business, for the rule and government thereof, for the public profit and commodities of the borough and inhabitants thereof, by the major part of them to be done and handled for the better order and government of men inhabiting therein, and of the business of the borough." She also gave to the corporate body, the borough, and the rents of certain estates;\* in consideration whereof they became liable to the building and keeping in repair the several bridges within the bounds of the corporation, and to find a schoolmaster for the free school, for ever, whom they were entitled to nominate and discharge at their pleasure.

> In the charter of Charles I. they are incorporated by the name of the mayor, aldermen, and burgesses, and are invested with ample powers for the government of the borough, both in a civil and judicial capacity.

> A new charter was granted by Charles II. but as it was only a confirmation of that granted by his father, with a few immaterial alterations, the former has always been considered, as that from which the present corporation derive their powers, and by which they are bound in all their proceedings.

> Beside the charters above enumerated, one was granted to the corporation. under the seal of the commonwealth, but having been in force only during the usurpation, it is no longer to be considered but as a matter of curiosity.

> The same may be said of the last charter granted by that unfortunate monarch James II. whose exile, and ultimate exclusion from the throne, put an end to its authority.

> Mention is also made in the diaries of three other charters, called the charters of liberties, which were formally surrendered by the late, to the new mayor on his entrance into office. These were, probably, copies of magna charta, and the two charters of confirmation granted by Henry III. at the commencement of his reign. Hume, speaking of these charters, says, "Thus these famous charters were brought nearly to the shape in which they have ever since stood; and they were, during many generations, the peculiar favorites of the English nation, and esteemed the most sacred rampart to national liberty and independence. As they secured the rights of all orders of men, they were anxiously defended by all, and became the basis and support of the

<sup>\*</sup> These rents at the time amounted to 41l. 9s. 7d. annually. 1 See Appendix A.

English monarchy, and a kind of original contract, which both limited the authority of the king, and insured the conditional allegiance of his subjects. XVIII. Though often violated, they were still claimed by the nobility and people; and, as no precedents were supposed valid that infringed them, they rather acquired than lost authority, from the frequent attempts made against them, in several ages, by regal and arbitrary power."

From this view of the gradual progress of the corporate body, we may conceive in what manner that institution, which at first consisted only of a guild-merchant for the protection of trade, without either judicial, legislative, or executive authority (for the mayor was not even a justice of the peace till the 34th of Henry VIII.) gradually assumed that form of constitution, which prevails in every part of the British empire, including the regal, aristocratical, and democratical authorities, and which by uniting the interests, and powers, of the three estates, seems best calculated to secure that, which ought to be the end of every government—the freedom and happiness of the people.

The number of burgesses, before the charter of Elizabeth, having been indefinite, the corporation elected as many as they thought fit, or as their revenue, which was oftentimes inadequate to their expenditure, obliged them to do; the fines on the admission of burgesses and freemen, prior to this period, forming the principal source of their revenue.\* These fines probably varied at different periods, according to the value of money. In the corporation diaries, commencing with the charter of Henry VI. the fine mentioned on the admission of the son of a freeman, or one who had served his time to a freeman, was four shillings, and for the admission of a stranger eight shillings and four pence, half of which was paid to the abbot. These fines, trilling as they may now appear, were then of sufficient consequence to induce the corporation to increase the number of burgesses beyond their proper limits, so that frequent contentions ar se at their meetings, and no order could be observed in conducting the public business, where so many persons of dif-

<sup>\*</sup> So great was the poverty of the corporation in the first year of the reign of Edward VI. that having been under the necessity of borrowing six pounds of the churchwardens of St. Lawrence's pansle, they requested to be permitted to repry it by instalments of ten shillings half yearly, and to be excused paying the interest. When the following entry concerning it appears in the corporation diary: "Whereas the mayor and burgesses are indebted to the church of St. Lawrence in six pounds, which was borrowed; for repayment whereof it is agreed, that the cofferer of the guild-hall shall pay the said wardens ten shillings every half year, until the whole be fully paid." And in 1555, " It was agreed by the mayor and burgesses, that every burgess of the bench shall leave fifteen shillings to those burgesses who are not able to live without assistance." However, at the commencement of the next century, 1607, their recorded this so much increased, by gifts from the crown and private changes, as to amount to the atman sum of . . j. st. Cl.

ferent interests were concerned; it became therefore necessary, in the reign XVIII. of Edward VI. to forbid the making of any more till their then present number were reduced to thirty, and the following by-law was entered in the diary for that purpose:

" Forasmuch as a great incumbrance has arisen from the great number of the burgesses, to the great perturbation and disquietment of the rest of the company there minding tranquility and quietness, it is ordered, that henceforth no more shall be made till the present number is reduced to thirty."

However, in the following reign, they found it necessary, from the state of their funds, to cancel the above by-law, and, in consequence, the number of burgesses kept increasing, till, by the charter of Elizabeth, they were limited to twenty-five, including the mayor.

The burgesses, on their admission, were to take the following oath:

"This herving the major, ye shall truman be to the kyng our sovrayn lorde, and to his heires, to the major of the borough of Radinge the kyngs leftenant and burges of the gylde merchant of the seide borough for the tyme being, and to all matters that may sownde to the comyn weel and prophite of the scide gylde; ve shall be truly avding, helping, and assistyng with your persone and goods to your power, and if ye know any persone that would hurt or disturbe the liberties and franceses of the seide gylde, labour, provoke, or styr, to breke any acte or ordynance, made or to be made, by the seide maior or his burgesses for the comyn weele of the same, that shall ye discover, shew and declare to the seide major, or to his lestenant, in open, or secret wise, (for) the comvn profit of the seide gylde, so that ye shall truly attende at all tymes, not having regard to your single profight in distresse of the comyn weele of the same gylde. The comyn counseil of this seide gylde and felloship of the same, that shall ye heele, and secret kepe, and it to no persone shew ne declare out of the seide gylde hall, except it be to a burgess of the same hall. All theise things shall ye observe, and truly kepe in all points to your power, so help yow God, and holy doome, and by thys booke."18

For the better government of the town, it was divided into five wards, but at what time this regulation took place, cannot now be ascertained, but from the distinction between the old, and the new wards, it is evident it did not take place at once, though the original division must have been at an early period. From Horn-street and the Butts having been formerly called the Old-street, it is supposed, with great probability, that this part of the town

was first built upon, and was accordingly called the Old-ward. The next, I conceive to have been High-ward, including the Market-place, as that was XVIII. most likely to have been the part of the town next built on, from its vicinity to the abbey; next followed Minster-ward, London ward, and lastly Newward. To each of these wards were appointed two ward officers or wardmen, in the nature of constables, to preserve the peace in each district, but their appointment occasioned several disputes between the masters of the guild and the abbots; each claiming the right of nomination, which, by a decree made by the king's justices in the year 1507, was determined to be in the mayor and burgesses, and the burgesses or freemen of the town, as will be shewn hereafter. These officers are still appointed under the name of wardens, with this difference, that they are now parish officers, rather than wardmen, and are nominated by the constables on their entrance into office, but the constables themselves are chosen by the mayor to serve with him for one year. The next regulation, if indeed it was not made prior to the former, was the distributing all the tradesmen and mechanics into classes or companies, into one of which every inhabitant was obliged to be admitted, or made free of, before he was suffered to exercise his trade or calling. These likewise were five in number; consisting of the mercers,' cutlers' and bellfounders', tanners', clothiers', and vintuers'; each of which companies had their appropriate fines of admission, and were governed by rules or by-laws, either made by themselves, or by the whole body of freemen assembled in their common hall.

whole body of freemen assembled in their common hall.

These regulations are contained in the following record belonging to the corporation, and, though without date, may, from collateral circumstances, be judged to have been written either, in the reign of Edward VI. or in that

of his sisters queen Mary or Elizabeth:

"An account of the several companies belonging to the guild-merchant of Reading, with their fines of admission, and the rules by which they were governed.

#### "THE MERCERS' AND DRAPERS' COMPANY,

comprising the mercers, drapers, potuaries,\* haberdashers, chapmen, taylors, and cloth-drawers.

\* Earthenwaremen.

"The fines of admission into this company were, for

|                 |     |   |   |   | l. | s. | d. |
|-----------------|-----|---|---|---|----|----|----|
| A mercer, -     |     | - |   | - | 4  | 0  | 0  |
| A draper,       | -   |   | - |   | 4  | 0  | 0  |
| A potuary, -    |     | - |   | - | 3  | 0  | 0  |
| A haberdasher,  | -   |   | - |   | 2  | 0  | 0  |
| A chapman, -    |     | - |   | - | 2  | 0  | 0  |
| A taylor,       | en. |   | - |   | 2  | 0  | 0  |
| A cloth-drawer, |     |   |   | - | 2  | 0  | 0. |

#### RULES.

- "Any foreigner\* retailing cloth in the town, to forfeit ten shillings each time.
- " No mercer, or taylor, to retail cloth, or women's hosen, under pain of three shillings and four-pence each time.
- "No taylor may set a journeyman to work, except he give him meat, drink, wages, and lodging in his own house, on forfeiture of three shillings and four-pence.
- "No haberdasher, except he be a freeman, to sell hats or caps, by retail, within the borough, except straw hats, on forfeiture of twelve pence.

## "THE CUTLERS' & BELL-FOUNDERS' COMPANY,

including the cutlers, bell-founders, brazierers, pewterers, smiths, pinners, barbers, carpenters, joiners, fletchers,† wheelers, basket makers, coopers, sawyers, bricklayers, card makers,‡ turners, plumbers, painters, and glaziers.

" The fines of admission into this company, were

|            |         |   |   |   |     | l. | S. | d. |
|------------|---------|---|---|---|-----|----|----|----|
| Cutler,    |         |   | - |   | -   | 2  | 0  | 0  |
| Bell-found | er,     | - |   | - |     | 3  | 0  | 0  |
| Smith,     | -       |   | - |   | -   | 1  | 0  | 0  |
| Barber,    |         | : |   | - |     | 1  | 0  | 0  |
| Joiner,    | _       |   | - |   | -   | 0  | 13 | 4  |
| Wheeler,   |         | ~ |   | - |     | 0  | 5  | 0  |
| Cooper,    | <b></b> |   | - |   | tom | 0  | 10 | 0  |
| Bricklayer | ,       | - |   |   |     | 0  | 10 | 0  |

<sup>\*</sup> A non-freeman.

<sup>†</sup> Arrow-maker.

<sup>‡</sup> Woolcombers' cards,

|            |     |   |   |   |     | Į. | s. | đ. |
|------------|-----|---|---|---|-----|----|----|----|
| Painter,   | -   |   | ~ |   | -   | 0  | 6  | 8  |
| Turner,    |     | - |   | • |     | 0  | 6  | 8  |
| Brazier,   | •   |   | - |   | _   | i  | 6  | 8  |
| Pinner, -  |     | ~ |   | - |     | 0  | 10 | 0  |
| Carpenter, | -   |   | - |   | _   | 0  | 13 | 4  |
| Fletcher,  |     | - |   | - |     | 0  | 10 | 0  |
| Basket-mak | er, |   | - |   | _   | 0  | 10 | 0. |
| Sawyer,    |     | _ |   | - |     | 0  | 10 | 0. |
| Plumber,   | -   |   | - |   |     | 0  | 13 | 4  |
| Glazier,   |     | - |   | - |     | 0  | 6  | 8  |
| Card-maker | ,   |   | - |   | en. | 0  | 13 | 4  |

### RULES.

"No smith may sell iron wares, within the borough, except a freeman, on forfeiture of two shillings each time.

"If any barber, who is a foreigner, shall draw teeth in any part of the town, except in a barber's shop, he shall forfeit twelve pence each time.

"Any barber inhabiting within the borough, shaving, trimming, dressing, or cutting any person on Sunday, except on the four fair days; shall forfeit for each time, twelve pence."

The following by-law was made by the corporation in 1443, at the commencement of the dispute between the houses of Lancaster and York, and might be intended to prevent unlawful meetings taking place under the mask of a barber's shop:

"The mayor and burgesses of Reading, grant and ordain, that from this time forward, no barber of Reading open any shop, nor shave any man, after ten of the clock in the night, between easter and michaelmas, nor, after nine of the clock in the night, from michaelmas to easter, but if (except) it be any stranger, or any worthy man of the town, he shall pay three hundred tiles (tegulas) to the guild-hall of Reading, as often times as he is found faulty, to be received by the cofferers for the time being.\*"

"No carpenter may retain a bachelor except as an indented servant for a year, and lodge and board him in his own house, on forfeiture of twelve pence each time."

\* It is very probable that at this period all the houses in Reading were covered with thatch, for even so late as 1558, there is an entry in the churchwardens' book of St. Mary's parish, "of two shillings for a load of straw to mend the church-house;" which shews, that thatch was even then not

## "THE TANNERS' & LEATHER SELLERS' COMPANY,

containing the tanners, leather-sellers, shoe-makers, curriers, glovers, sadlers, jerkin-makers, bottle-makers, collar-makers, and coblers.

"The fines payable for admittance into this company were, for a

|               |     |       |   |     | ₹ | S. | d. |
|---------------|-----|-------|---|-----|---|----|----|
| Tanner, -     |     | -00   |   | -   | 4 | 0. | 0  |
| Shoemaker,    | *** |       | • |     | 3 | 0  | 0  |
| Sadler, -     |     | _     | , |     | 1 | 0  | 0  |
| Bottle-maker, | -   |       | - |     | 0 | 10 | 0  |
| Point-maker,  |     | - 100 |   | . * | 0 | 10 | 0  |
| Cobler, -     |     |       | - |     | 1 | 0  | 0  |
| Glover, -     |     | -     |   | -   | 2 | 0  | 0  |
| Jerkin-maker, | -   |       | - |     | 0 | 10 | 0  |
| Girdle-maker, |     | -     |   | -   | 0 | 10 | 0  |
| Collar-maker, | •   |       | - |     | 0 | 5  | 0  |
| Currier, -    |     | -     |   | -   | 2 | 0  | 0  |

#### RULES.

"No shoemaker to make any boots, or shoes, in any part of the town, but only in Shoe-makers' row, that is to say, from the east side of the street from the Forbury-gate unto the Hallowed-brook, upon pain of forfeiting three shillings and four-pence each time.

" No foreigner to bring into the borough shoes or boots for sale, except on fair-days, on forfeiture of three shillings and four pence each time.

"Shoe-makers to board and lodge their journeymen in their own houses being unmarried, on pain of forfeiting for each time twelve pence.

"There shall be no bear-baiting or bull-baiting on the sabbath-day during service, on pain of twelve pence, to be paid by every householder where the baiting is.

exclusively used for the habitations of the poor. Mr. Newcombe, in his History of the Abbey of St. Alban, observes, that tiles and bricks of clay, and burnt, were invented about 1440. Now, as the time here specified is only three years prior to this by law, it is not unlikely, that, to prevent in future the dreadful effect of fires, so frequently attendant on this species of covering, the corporation were induced to order this fine to be paid in tiles, instead of money, in hopes of introducing them into general practice. And to shew they were in earnest, we soon after find one John Bristol was fined two thousand one hundred tiles, for shaving seven persons after the time specified, but which, on account of his poverty, were reduced to twelve hundred. This assertion of Mr. Newcombe is not however quite correct, as tiles were used in a much carlier age, though perhaps not before brought into general practice.

## "THE CLOTHIERS' & CLOTH-WORKERS' COMPANY,

CHAP. XVIII.

including the clothiers, dyers, weavers, shearmen, shuttle makers and ash-burners.

"The fines of admission into this company were, for a

|                |   |   |   |     | Z. | ε. | đ. |
|----------------|---|---|---|-----|----|----|----|
| Clothier, -    |   | - |   | -   | 2  | 0  | 0  |
| Dyer, -        | - |   | - |     | 2  | 0  | 0  |
| Shuttle-maker, |   | ~ |   | -   | 0  | 10 | 0  |
| Cloth-drawer,  | - |   | - |     | 0  | 10 | 0  |
| Weaver, -      |   | - |   | -   | 2  | 0  | 0  |
| Fuller, -      |   |   | - |     | 2  | 0  | 0  |
| Ashburner, -   |   | ē |   | *** | 0  | 10 | 0  |

#### RULES.

"Clothers using, or occupying in their houses, more than two broad! Itoms, shall forfeit, for each loom, ten shillings; but Mr. Aldworth to be allowed four.\*

" No clothier shall weave in his own house cloth for another clothier, on pain of paying six shillings and eight pence each time.

"Any person of the weaving business, who shall be proved false in conveying away, or detaining any yarn, shall be for ever disfranchised.

"If any weaver has more journeymen than he can lodge in his house, he is to give notice to the warden of the company how many he has more, and the warden shall assign them a meete house to dwell in, on pain for not giving notice twelve pence.

"Any clothier being a shearman, who shall work any work of any other clothier but his own, shall forfeit each time three shillings and four pence.

"Any clothier putting his cloth to burle, rowe, to shear to any mill-man, or any that keepeth a fulling mill, shall pay for each three shillings and four pence, except Mr. Aldworth, who may have two cloths weekly burled at Caversham-mill, during the time he shall have any interest therein.

"Persons putting wool out to dry, or hanging cloth on the sabbath day, to forfeit twelve pence.

#### \* See the list of mayors.

<sup>+</sup> This word is still in use at the Orkney Islands, for sheraing, or rather pulling the wool of the sheep by the hand,—Barry's Orkneys.

## "THE VICTUALLERS' & INNHOLDERS' COMPANY,

comprising the vintners, innholders, bakers, brewers, butchers, fishmongers, chandlers, makers, wood-mongers, salters, and flax-dressers.

"The fines payable for admission into this company were, for a

|              |                |    |   |      |    | Z. | S. | d. |
|--------------|----------------|----|---|------|----|----|----|----|
| Vintner,     | -              |    | - |      | -  | 2  | 0  | 0  |
| Baker, -     |                | -  |   | -    |    | 2  | 0  | 0  |
| Innholder,   | -              |    | - |      | ** | 3  | 0  | 0  |
| Fishmonger,  |                | ** |   | -    |    | 2  | 0  | 0  |
| Malt-maker,  |                |    | - |      | -  | 3  | 0  | 0  |
| Salter, -    |                | -  |   | -    |    | 2  | 0  | 0  |
| Brewer,      | -              |    | - |      | -  | 2  | 0  | 0  |
| Butcher,     |                | -  |   | -    |    | 2  | 0  | 0  |
| Chandler,    | -              |    | - |      | -  | 2  | 0  | 0  |
| Woodmonge    | T <sub>2</sub> | -  |   | time |    | 2  | 0  | 0  |
| Flax-dresser | ,              |    | - |      | -  | 2  | 0  | 0" |

The rules belonging to this company are missing; but we collect from the diaries, that the victuallers were strictly enjoined to observe lent, and were forbidden to kill or dress flesh meat in that season, without a licence from the abbot, while his authority existed, and afterwards, of the mayor.

And, to prevent impositions in the price and strength of beer sold at public-houses, two ale tasters were appointed to set the price thereof; and if the mayor for the time being happened to be a victualler, the following addition was made to the oath taken by him on his entrance into office:

"That he would truly and indifferently, according to the plenty or scarcity of victuals within the borough, assess and set the price and assize thereof, for the time he should remain in the office."\*

The price of ale and beer set by assize, was, for double or strong beer, eight shillings per barrel, or two pence three farthings per gallon; ale four shillings the dozen, and small beer four shillings the barrel; but, for retail, a full quart of the best beer one penny, and of small beer one halfpenny.

The number of freemen belonging to the different companies in Reading, in the sixteenth century, was as follows:

<sup>\*</sup> It appears from this, that the corporation assumed the power of setting a maximum on other articles of provision, as well as on bread and ale.

| Clothiers,     | -       | 26  | Brought up 187      |
|----------------|---------|-----|---------------------|
| Dyers, -       | -       | 3   | Taylors, - 35 CHAP. |
| Weavers,       |         | 30  | Cloth-drawer, . 1   |
| Shearmen, -    |         | 30  | 1                   |
| Shuttle-maker, | -       | 1   | Cutlers, - 4        |
| Ash-burner, -  | _       | 1   | Bell-founders, - 3  |
|                |         | _   | D                   |
| Tanners, -     |         | 12  | 0 1.7               |
| Shoe-makers, - | _       | 12  |                     |
| Curriers, -    |         | 2   |                     |
|                | -       |     | Barbers, - 5        |
| Glovers, -     | •       | 9   | Carpenters, 10      |
| Sadlers, -     | -       | 5   | Painters, • 2       |
| Jerkin-makers, | -       | 2   | Joiners, - 4        |
| Bottle-maker,  | -       | 1   | Fletchers, - 3      |
| Collar-makers, |         | 2   | Wheelers, 2         |
| Coblers, -     | -       | 11  | Basket-makers, - 3  |
|                |         |     | Coopers, - 3        |
| Mercers, -     | _       | 15  | Sawyers, 7          |
| Drapers, -     | -       | 6   | Bricklayers, 8      |
| Potuaries, -   | _       | 2   | Card-makers, - 2    |
| Haberdashers,  | _       | 8   | Plumber, - I        |
| Chapmen, -     | _       | 8   |                     |
|                | _       | I   |                     |
| Hosier, -      | -       | 1   | Glaziers, - 2       |
|                | _       |     |                     |
| Carried 1      | forward | 187 | Total 301           |

The vintners' company are not included in this account; but from the sum total, as here given, some idea may be formed of the populousness of this place, in the reign of Elizabeth.

If we go back to a period prior to the reformation, we shall find the corporation frequently contending with the abbot and monks for rights they could not be entitled to, as the latter had, from their foundation, been endowed, by charter, with such ample powers, that little could be left for the corporation beside the right of regulating their own mercantile affairs.

By the charter granted to the abbot and monks in 1121, among other things, they are empowered " to try all offences committed within and without the borough, in the highways and in all other places, whether by their own servants or strangers, with all causes that may or can arise, with socca and



sacca, tol and theam, and infangentheft and outfangentheft, and ham-socna.\*
And the abbot and his monks shall hold courts of justice for the trial of assaults, thefts, murders, shedding of blood, and breaking the peace, and all other crimes, as much as belongs to the regal power."

The power thus granted to the abbot and his monks must be considered as nearly equal to that of the sovereign himself; and, as the clergy were at all times tenacious of their prerogatives, either in their civil or religious capacities, and as the corporation must have been equally anxious to emancipate themselves from their jurisdiction, we need not wonder if, during the latter part of their government, frequent disputes arose between them, even of matters seemingly of trifling moment. One of these was on the appointment of constables and wardmen, which both claimed the right of doing, the one by prescription, the other under the powers given them by their charter. The right to the butchers' shambles, which the corporation had rebuilt, and the privilege of permitting stalls to be set in the high-ways of the town, were likewise subjects of contention, inasmuch as they were sources of revenue to which ever party could establish the right. But the principal cause of dispute was, the claim made by the abbots, of appointing the mayors and burgesses of the corporation by their own authority, thereby endeavoring to render them subservient to their jurisdiction in matters that only concerned the interests of the corporate body, which in fact they denied them to be. This interference of the abbot was consequently resented by the corporation; for on his subsequently putting his claim in force, by choosing a mayor without their consent, they came to the following resolution, which is entered in their diary.

"It is agreed by William Jefford, major of the borough of Redynge, and the burgesses of the same, that whatever person be elected and chosen to be major by the lord abbot, the same person not to be put in election by the space of three years nexte followynge. It is also agreed, that no burgess be chosen, without the consent of the major for the time being, or, without him, of twelve of the burgesses."

These contentions were the natural consequences of two powers differently constituted presiding in the same place, and whose supposed rights must frequently clash with each other. These disputes continued so long to disturb the peace of the town, and to prevent that unanimity in the governing authorities, without which it was impossible the public business could be carried on with propriety, that the corporation came to the resolution of laying their

<sup>•</sup> A liberty of trying persons guilty of burglary (pro ingressu hospitii violenter) and to be exempt from paying a fine to the king on that account.

complaints before doctor Fox, bishop of Winchester, and the lord chamberlain Daubeny, who advised them to refer the decission to sir Robert Rede, kt. and XVIII. Mr. John Kingsmill, justices of the king's-bench, who, after considering all the circumstances, made the following decree, which is here inserted at large, as it will afford the best evidence of the facts, and of the situation of the inhabitants at this period:

" It is to be had in mynde and knowyn, that in the yere of our Lorde God 1507, and in the 23d yere of the reigne of our sovrayne lorde king Henry the seventhe, in the tyme of Christyne Nicholas then beinge mayre of the gylde-merchante of the burgh of Redynge, certayn variances and grevances of long tyme were dependynge, between abbott John Thorne lorde of Redynge foreseide, and the mayre and burgesses of the same, by the space of nineteen yeres before the date above written, for approvynge of the corporation of the seide gylde-merchant, for orderynge of constables and wardens, with other articles. Which grevances and varvances, the aforescide mayre with Richard Cleche and Thomas Carpenter, burgesses and late mayres of the seide gylde, withe the assent and consent of all the burgesses of the same, by way of complaynte shewyd unto doctor Fox lorde prive seale, and bysshopp of Wynchestre, and lorde Daubeny, chamblayn to our seide sovrayn lorde, for the whych, the same lorde wyllinge and desyringe the seide mayre, Richard and Thomas, burgesses, by the syght of the evydence on both parties t'abyde the direction of Robert Rede, knyght, chief justice of the comen benche at Westmynster, and John Kyngesmill, justice of the same benche. Whereupon the seide justices havynge sight of the seide evydence, firste gave sentence and affermyd the seide mayre and burgesses of the scide gylde-merchant to be corporate. And concerning all other the premisses for a full conclusion and continual peace, between the parties aforescide for ever to be had, the seide lorde chamblayn and justices determined and concluded in manner and forme followinge in such a byll of papyr to thys boke annexed, wherein their have subscribed their names withe theire owne hands, more playnly it apperith."

"Th 'artycles mocyoned by the reverend fader in God Richard byshopp of Wynchestre, Gyles Daubeney knyghte, lorde Daubeney chamblayn to the kynge our sovrayne lorde, Robert Rede knyghte, chief justice of the comen benche at Westmynster, and John Kyngesmill, justice of the same benche, for agreemente to be hadd between th' abbot of the monastry of our lady seynt Mary the virgin of Redynge of one partie, and the keper of the gylde merchante of Redynge, and the burgesses of the same gylde of th'other partie. Fyrst for makyng of the keper of the seide gylde-merchante, it is advysed by the seide lorde and justices, that the burgesses of the seide gylde

shall name and present three good and able burgesses of the seide gylde, to the seide abbot yerely, in the fest of seynt Mychaell th'archangell, if the same abbot be at Redynge, within eight daies next after the same fest, and if he be absent from Redynge by the space of eight daies, next after the seide fest, then to name and present three persones to the pryor, chambrer or subchambrer of the monastery, for the tyme being. And in the same maner desyer and pray the same abbot, if he be present, or in his seide absens the seide pryor, chambrer, or sub-chambrer, to chose and admytt one of the same three persons, at his pleasure, to be keper of the seide gylde-merchante for a yere then next ensuing. And the same person so chosyn keper, in the presens of the seide abbot, if he be present, be to hym sworne, or in his foreseide absens, then in the presens of the seide pryor, chambrer or sub-chambrer, or before one of them, be sworne accordyngly to the effect and words conteyned in an olde fyne thereof leveyed in the tyme of king Henry the thyrde. And also that all other thyngs and articles comprised in the same fyne shall be, betwene the seide abbott, and the foreseide keper of the seide gylde-merchant and burgesses thereof, fermly helde and kept, according to th' effect and porte of the same fyne.

"And for election of two constables and ten wardmen of five wards in the towne of Redynge, to be made hereafter, as oft as nede shall requyre, it is moved by the seide lorde and justices, that the seide abbott shall suffer the keper of the seide gylde, and the comonalte howsholders of the seide town, and the most nombre of them, to chose one able and dyscrete persone of the burgesses of the seide gylde, to be one constable, and five honest burgesses to be five of the wardmen of the seide five wards. And also the seide keper, burgesses and comynalte, howsholders of the same towne, to chose another able persone of the same comynaltie at large, beying no burgess of the seide gylde, to be the other constable of the seide towne. And other five able persons of the seide comynaltie at large, by the same five burgesses of the seide gylde, and no burgesses thereof, to be the other five wardmen of the seide town.

"And all the seide elections to be made in the lete and law day of the seide abbot of his seide town. And also both the seide constables and ten wardmen to be admytted, and solemnly sworne, only in the same lete and law day, before the steward of the seid abbott, or his depute, truly to do and exercise all things truly apperteyning to their offices in the seide town.

"And, as to making of burgesses of the seide gylde, it is directed by the scide lorde and justices, that whensoever any persone shall be able and named by the keper and burgesses of the seide gylde, to be a burgess of the same, that then, the keper of the seide gylde, for the tyme being, as oft as any

persone shall be hereafter so made burgess of the seid gylde, shall shew to the seide abbott thereof, by the space of a fortnyght next before the same XVIII. persone shall be made burgess, and requyre the seide abbot, or, in his absens, the seide pryor, chambrer or sub-chambrer of the seide monasterie for the tyme being, to assign a monk of the same monasteric to surveie, and be present at, the cessyng of the fyne of the same persone to be made burgess of the same gylde. And the seide abbot shall from hensforthe, upon everie such reasonable request, assygne, or cause to be assygned, one of his comoyns to do the same. The one half of every such fyne to be levied for th'use of the seide abbot, and his successors, and th'other half thereof to th'use of the seide keper and burgesses of the seide gylde, to the comon profet of the seide gylde to be applyed. And that the fyne of a son of everie burgess of the seide gylde, lawfully begotten, be onlie four shyllyngs, when he shall be made a burgess. And if the fyne of any forener hereafter to be made a burgess, be testified in any of the seide courts by six burgesses of the seide gylde, in such forme as hath been used in tymes past to be reasonable, that is to say, to be testyfyed by the same burgesses by the othe that they made when they were made burgesses of the seide gylde, then the seide comovne of the said abbott. shall not refuse that fyne, but then the same persone to be admytted burgess for the same fyne so testyfyed.

"And, as touching chepyn gavell,\* which is a yerely fyne only, of all and everie burgess of the seide gylde, which out of tyme of mynde hath been payed yerely to the predecessors of the seide abbot, by everie burgess of the seide gylde, that is to saie, every burgess of the same gylde hath payed five pence yerely, and the widowe of everie burgess of the seide gylde two pence farthinge yerely, at the fest of seynt Peter ad vincula, for their occupation of merchandies in the seide towne, for whych fyne of chepyn gavell it is thought by the seide lorde and justices, for a full declaration thereof hereafter, that everie burgess of the seide gylde and widowe aforeseid for the seide fyne of chepyn gavell, shall and may frely bye and sell all manner of merchandies in their howses and shoppes in the seide towne, and also bye and sell, all manner of merchandies and thyngs venable in feyres and markets of the seide town out of their howses and shoppes.

"And it is advysed by the seide lorde and justices, that now from hensforthe the seide abbott shall suffer the keper of the seide gylde and burgesses of the same to set stalles in the voyde growndes of the seide town, without

<sup>\*</sup> Among the articles that composed the revenues of the abbey, we find the annual amount of cheapyn gavel to be only 125. 11d. so that the number of freemen could not be very great. - See folio 276.

any other thyng thereof paying, but only the seide yerely fyne of chepyn gavell, so allway, that the same stalles be not to the prejudice ne noysance of any inhabitant of the same towne, ne be any lett of passage in any high way or strete of the same towne. And if the stalles so set be to the noysance of any of the seide inhabitants, or lett of the seide highway, then it is to be reformed only, by the bayliff of the seide abbott. And that of all other inhabitants of the seide towne beyng no burgesses, the seide abbott shall take and have such fynes and customs for their merchandies to be occupied in the same towne, as he and his predecessors have had thereout tyme of mynde. And as to the determination of the ryght of the flesh shambellys or botcherie in the seide town, which the keper of the seide gylde and burgesses of the same claymed, it is advysed by the seide lorde and justices, that the keper of the seide gylde, and the burgesses of the same hereafter, shall shewe their evydences for them thereof, before my lorde bishopp of Wynchestre, and the seide lorde chambleyn, and that then both the seide parties to be ordered further by the seide lorde, upon sight thereof.

" R. BYNTON.

"GILES DAWBENEY.

"R. REDE.

"John Kingesmill."

It appears from this decree, that the authority of the keeper and burgesses was at this time very circumscribed: they were not considered a body corporate, till it was confirmed by this decision; and even then, they were permitted to enjoy very little of the power which civil magistrates are usually invested with. They could not even choose a keeper (mayor) without submitting their choice to the approbation of the abbot; neither could they admit any person to the freedom of the borough, without giving him a formal notice of their intention so to do, that he might share in the fine.

By the manner in which they are permitted to elect constables and wardmen, it is plain the arbitrators considered their right so to do, was at least doubtful, else they would not have desired the abbot to suffer it; implying more of a concession on the part of the abbot, than of right in that of the corporation. The same may be inferred from the permission to set up stalls in the town, which, if the abbot's bailiff considered a nuisance, he might remove at his pleasure; so that in fact the corporation possessed no jurisdiction over the town before the decree was passed, and had only the shadow of one afterwards.

The inhabitants of the town, in consequence of the feudal system, had always been considered, as the property of the abbot, who was their supreme

lord; even at the time of this decision, we find they were not permitted to buy or sell in their own houses or shops, without paying an annual fine to the XVIII. abbot; neither could the son of a freeman be admitted to his freedom, without paying a certain sum to the lord; and the only advantage he gained from being entitled to his freedom by birth or servitude, was, that his fine to the lord was fixed, while that for a foreigner was undetermined.



Notwithstanding the regulations above prescribed, respecting the election of the mayor, and the admission of burgesses into the corporation, the dispute was revived in the subsequent reign, and the decision referred to the king in council, by whom the following decree was made, dated at Windsor, October 26th, 1510:

"As well by the assent of the abbot of Reading, as of the mayor or keper of the gylde and his comburgenses, that whensoever any persone shall be ennabled by the saide mayor or keper to be made a burges, the said mayor or keper shall give monycion unto the saide abbot, or, in his absens, to the pryor, chamberer, or subchamberer of the seide monastre, to send one of his comoynes unto the guild-hall of the seide town at the portsmouth there to be holden then next after, to survei and be presente at the assessing of the fyne of the seide burgesses, and if the seide monke take any exception unto the seide fyne, then if the seide fyne be then testyfied and affirmed by four burgesses of the seide gylde, by such othe as they made, when they were made burgesses, the seide monke for this tyme only, because there be presente by no more but five burgesses in the seide borough, shall be content, and then and there forthwith, in the presens of the seide monke, before the mayor of the gylde, the steward or under steward of the seide abbot, shall enter the moyety of the fyne to the seide abbot belongynge, and take then a pledge for the same. And then shall minister unto the burges then made, an othe under the words following:

"Thou shalt true man be, unto the king and to his heires, kings; thou shalt truly and diligently observe and keep all and singular articles concernynge the gylde-merchante of this borough, so help thee God and holy dome, and by all the evangelists.

" And if the seide abbot, or in his absens, the pryor, chamberer or subchamberer, at any tyme hereafter, refuse to send their comoyne upon monycion given as is above, or after the seide fyne so assessed or affirmed, the steward or under steward, at any tyme hereafter refuse unto him the seide othe, then it shall be lawful to the seide mayor, and his successors for the tyme beyng, to minister unto him the seide othe, and then that persone to be admytted for a burges, to enjoye all liberties of the seide gylde, without any exceptions. And

this order to be observed and kept for makyng of burgesses, and takyng of the XVIII. othe hereafter for ever, so that their fynes, if any exception be taken to them, be testyfied from henceforth by six burgesses, accordynge to the olde fyne.

" And for making of the mayor of the seide gylde, for this tyme only, it is ordered by the seide councill, that when those three persons lately presented unto the pryor of the scide monastre, have been at the portsmouth aforeseide, his fyne there entered, and the othe taken, as is above, that then they shall be presented unto the seide abbot within eight daies, then next after in the seide monastre, by Thomas Carpenter, or if the seide abbot be absens from thense, by the space of eight daies, then, there to be presented by the seide Thomas, to the pryor, chamberer or sub-chamberer, within the said monastre, and one of them to be taken and admytted for major of the gylde till the fest of seynt Michael next following, and then thensforth such order to be taken for makyng of the maior of the seide gylde yerely, as was agreed by my lorde of Wynchestre, lorde Daubeny, sir Robert Rede and John Kyngesmill, justices. And the like othe to be gyven by the seide abbot, pryor, chamberer, or sub-chamberer, to the seide maior, at the admission hereafter, at every tyme as is above seide, for the burgesses, and no other.

(Signed)

- " THOMAS SURREY.
- " RICHARD WINTON.
- " CHARLES SOMERSET.
- " HARRY MORNEY.
- " THOMAS ENGLEFIELD."

From the manner in which this decision is drawn up, it may be inferred, that the principal cause of the dispute was, the distribution of the fines to be levied on the admission of burgesses. It is probable that the abbot, either wishing to encrease the fine above the usual rate, or suspecting some collusion among the members of the corporation to defraud him of his moiety, had refused to allow any burgesses to be made, so long, that their number was reduced below six, which by the former decree were required to swear to the true amount of the fine given; on which account the corporation appealed to the king in council, who by this decision authorises the four remaining burgesses to testify on this occasion, but that in future six only should be a competent number; so necessary it appeared in those days to guarantee from fraud so trifling a fine.

The delay in the admission of the new mayor into office by the abbot, probably arose from the same cause—the reduced number of burgesses, who must, all but one, have returned themselves; this irregularity however was

sanctioned by the present decree, for the abbot was now obliged to make choice of one of the three, whom he had before refused, to serve the office XVIII. of mayor for the remainder of the year; after which the elections were to be conducted in the usual course. At length the dissolution of the abbey, which soon after followed, put an end to these disputes which had so long been agitated between the rival authorities, and the corporate body by degrees entered upon all the functions the abbots had before exercised, except the tryal of capital offences, which has since been referred to the decision of the judges at the county assizes; in other respects their authority is nearly the same. The mayor for the time being is lord of the manor, holds lete and law courts, appoints all the civil officers, is with the aldermen and burgesses exempt from military service, and determines in all minor cases relative to the town.

Having now shewn in what manner the corporation attained their present civil jurisdiction over the borough, it remains to make a few remarks on their government of the ancient guild-merchant; for although, as it has been already shewn, their authority in the town was originally very limited, yet, in respect to their own members, they seem to have exercised an almost despotic power over them. They could elect any of the freemen to serve as burgesses or assistants, and on their refusal to take the oaths of admission, could fine them at their own discretion, at first; but in 1673 the fine was limited to forty pounds; and soon after John Hall, Charles Calverly, and Thomas Thorne, on being chosen burgesses, and refusing to take the oath, were severally fined in the above sum; when, Mr. Hall, "for his present compliance and peaceable and quiet manner," had his fine reduced to thirty pounds; but the other gentlemen, after a trial at law, in which the corporation obtained a verdict, were obliged to pay the whole sum. However, in the same year, and perhaps, in consequence of the opposition made to the above regulation, the fine was, as we find, from the following entry in the diary, reduced to twenty pounds:

"Forasmuch as divers persons being burgesses and inhabitants of the borough of Reading, have been duly elected to be assistants to the said borough; that, out of their disaffection to government have contemptuously refused to take the oath, lawfully tendered them for the execution of the said office of assistant; which mischief, if not speedily prevented, will turn to the decay and ruin of the said borough, by wanting of sufficient men to supply the place of assistants for the said borough; be it therefore ordered by the



mayor, aldermen, and assistants, that if any burgess or inhabitant, shall be hereafter elected to be an assistant to the said borough, shall without any reasonable or just cause, refuse to take the oath, for the execution of the said office of assistant, being duly thereunto required, shall incur and forfeit the penalty of twenty pounds, or such other reasonable pain (not exceeding the sum of thirty pounds) as shall be imposed and inflicted upon him by the mayor and aldermen of the said borough, or the greater part of them."

However, since this period, they have had very few occasions to put this by-law in force, particularly of late years; the honor alone being considered by the most respectable gentlemen in the borough, a sufficient recompense for fulfilling the arduous duties of an office which ultimately leads to the chiefmagistracy of the borough.

The fine of an alderman, for refusing to take the oath, was, in like manner, at first, indeterminate, and perhaps was never positively fixed at any particular sum; in some instances it appears to have been twenty pounds; in others more, as in the case of Edward Hamblin, in 1642, who, refusing to take the oath, on being elected an alderman, was fined one hundred marks; and, on non-payment of the fine, was committed to the compter prison.\* This gentleman, being a royalist, was afterwards obliged to compound with the parliament's commissioners, for his estate, in the sum of thirty-six pounds, six shillings, and eight pence.

Another authority exercised by the corporate body, was the disfranchising such of their members as they conceived had, by their misconduct, forfeited their freedom, as in the following instance, which we have selected from others for the peculiarity of the case, and the severity of the punishment, as it appears to have been inflicted without trial, and for an offence, if it was any, that is daily committed, and never noticed, in these more happy times:

"Forasmuch as Joseph Saunders, one of the said burgesses, for sedition and slanderous and opprobrious words, by him openly spoken, against the king's (Edward VI.) honorable council, by their commandment, was committed to punishment, on the pillory, on the market day, and there to stand all the market-time, and then both his ears cut off. And after, for other seditious, lewd, and slanderous words, by him, at sundry times after that, spoken, to the great perturberance and disquietness of his honest neighbors, it was therefore thought fit, by the said mayor and burgesses, that the said

<sup>\*</sup> Over the gateway leading into the Forbury from the Market-place, lately taken down.

Joseph Saunders be no fit man to continue of the said company; whereupon the said mayor and burgesses, with one assent and consent, for the causes aforesaid, the said day and year, have expelled and discharged the said Joseph Saunders, from the said hall and company, for ever."



But the most oppressive privilege they possessed, and which tended more than all the rest, to confine the commerce of the town, and the number of the inhabitants within too narrow limits, was that of refusing the freedom of the town, and consequently, the liberty of trading within its bounds, to strangers, who might otherwise have considerably increased its population, and improved its commercial resources.

Under this selfish and tyrannical system of municipal government, which formerly prevailed, an Englishman, who was so unfortunate as not to have obtained his freedom in any town, either by birth, servitude, or purchase, was considered a foreigner in his native land, and consequently liable to be driven from borough to borough, as an alien, or as one who was every where considered an intruder. Capital, industry, abilities, and those numberless shades which mark the different characters of individuals, were of no avail, when put in competition with corporate rights, however absurd.

If perchance an industrious tradesman, from being overlooked, had, for a short time, been permitted to reside in any of these chartered towns, the least prospect appearing of his succeeding in his business, or mercantile concerns, was sufficient to rouse the jealous envy of others in the same line, who, by a proper information laid before the chief magistrate, could, at any time, get him sent away with ignominy, on the shortest notice. The process was simple, and arbitrary; many examples of which might be produced, from entries in the diaries of this corporation; but, the following instance of oppression, though of an obscure individual, may serve to shew to what a pitch this system had arrived:

"July 1545, Robert Hooper, a barber, being a foreigner, was this day again ordered to be gone out of the town at his peril, with his wife and children."

If the unfortunate objects of these persecutions were, even from unavoidable circumstances, detained a few days longer than the term specified, "the town sergeants were sent to shut up their shops, and to see them beyond the limits of the borough."<sup>2</sup>

So tenacious were even all the lowest members of the guild merchant, under this oppressive system of municipal government, that no individual member of one company was allowed to interfere with the exclusive rights of another, but, like the different casts in India, every man was obliged to confine his exertions and his ingenuity to his own trade. The carpenter, though qualified in every other respect, could not execute any works that were appropriated to the joiners' company; nor could either of them presume to interfere with those of the sawyers. Even the shoe-makers were not permitted to mend a pair of shoes, because, by so doing, they intrenched on the rights of the coblers. In 1632, "The coblers, being freemen, petitioned the corporation against the shoe-makers, for mending old shoes contrary to the rights of the town; whereupon it was recommended to the shoe-makers not to offend therein, at their peril."

Such were the oppressions and restrictions, that not only strangers, but even freemen, were subject to, under these municipal regulations, in former times; regulations, adapted, it should seem—to chill the natural exertions of the inhabitants—to paralize their means of improving their talents, and their conditions—and to render them fit objects for oppression. In consequence of this exclusive system, trade was stagnated; the town depopulated; and, for want of a proper stimulous, the lower classes were suffered to pass the greater part of their days, without employment, in poverty and every species of distress.\* But, thanks to circumstances that have intervened, or to the more enlightened system that has been adopted for nearly a century past, these shackles on trade have been taken off, and every man, wherever born, is now entitled to the same privileges as the natives, without its being in the power of any individual to molest him in his trading concerns. †

\* In the 16th and 17th centuries, the lower class of people seems to have been degraded to the lowest state of wickedness; robberies of every kind were committed; and scarcely a day passed without the commission of some crime; as may be seen by the examinations in the corporation duries. The following entries, are proofs, if any were wanting, of this prevalence of vice among the lower orders:

"Feb. 29, 1629, The assizes were holden at Abyngdon; at which time thirteen men and youths died here for their offences committed."

"April 1631, At this assizes, eleven men suffered death for their crimes; three of which were of this town."

† The last instance of a stranger obtaining the freedom of the borough, was in 1757, when Thomas Bramley, bricklayer, was admitted a freeman. But this seems to have been occasioned by a doubt that had been started, whether a non-freeman could partake of the charitable gifts belonging to the town; for it appears, that on the same day that he was admitted to his freedom, he gave security for sixty pounds, part of Mr. Kendrick's gift, to be lent to poor tradesmen, for three years, without interest,

1 Corporation Diary.



West Hier of Correspon - Bridge.



The corporation also exercised a jurisdiction over part of the river Thames, lying eastward of the town; but of what kind, is not now known, XVIII. as their power, whatever it was, has been long since superseded by the acts passed for the improvement of that river. However, as long as they retained the right, they endeavored, like the city of London, to preserve it, by keeping a certain number of swans upon it, called "the game of swans," which were protected by a keeper, or farmer, appointed for that purpose, as in the year 1457, when the mayor, in right of his office, farmed the whole, eight in number, to Thomas Benwell, who agreed to take the stock, and to be at all charges attending them, paying yearly to the mayor three cygnets; but this agreement being soon afterwards cancelled, a keeper was appointed by the corporation, with a salary of twenty shillings, per annum, to look after them.

It is uncertain how far their jurisdiction extended, but it was, probably as far as Maidenhead-bridge, if not farther; for, in 1522, Richard Beme, the keeper, came and shewed that there were at Hambleden-mill two white swans, at Kellerman three, at Marlow-bridge one, at Cookham one."1

Another right exercised by the corporation, was the levying a toll on all strangers passing any of the bridges within the town; and also of all barges passing under Caversham-bridge:\* The former had long been disused, but the latter continued till the reign of James II. when the payment was opposed by one Walter Chapman and others, bargemasters of the city of Oxford, who alleged, "that since the alteration of the bridge, by removing several old decayed stone and brick arches, which formerly obstructed the passage, by penning up the water above the bridge, boats could now pass without the use of the winch, which alone they had been accustomed to pay for, and not as a toll for passing under the bridge."2 They moreover claimed their privilege, as citizens of Oxford, to be exempt from the payment of pontage, throughout all England, by a charter granted to the citizens, by Richard II.

\* This bridge crosses the Thames at the village from whence it takes its name, separating the counties of Berks and Oxford nearly in its centre. The south division, under which the barges pass, and the five brick arches on the north side of this passage, as represented in the plate, are within the county of Berks, and are kept in repair by the corporation. Over one of the arches, is a tablet, with the following inscription:

WILLIAM EVERETT, Mayor. JOHN THORPE, Chamberlain, 1730.

2 Corporation Diary.

2 Ibid.

This cause was tried in the Exchequer, and a verdict given in favor of the bargemasters; since which no toll has been required for barges belonging to Oxford, or any other place on the river, on passing this bridge.

By a late act of parliament, the corporation have disused the power of holding a court of record for the recovery of small debts, which had before been of great service to the inferior class of tradesmen, from the cheap and expeditious manner they could enforce the payment of small debts from the unprincipled debtor; most of which are now either lost, or obtained at a price disgusting to humanity.

A copy of the original oath taken by the mayor, as chief magistrate, justice of the peace, and clerk of the market.

"You shall swear to bear faith and troth, and also obedience unto our sovereign lord the king's majesty, his heirs and successors, and well and truly serve him in the several offices of mayor, justice of the peace, and quorum, and clerk of the market of this borough, and guild merchant of Reading, whereunto you are elected, and chosen, for this year ensuing; the liberties and franchises of the said borough, to the utmost of your power, you shall maintain and defend. You shall carefully endeavor the profit and good government of this borough, and so far as in you lieth, take care, that the state, stock, and bequests of benefactors of this borough, be maintained, preserved, and employed, as they ought. You shall likewise endeavor to maintain a just and legal proceeding in the court of pleas in this borough. shall not be a counsel in any cause there depending before you. You shall well and truly do, and cause to be observed and kept, in this borough. the good assize of bread, beer, ale, and wine, and all victuals, weights, measures, and other things thereunto appertaining. You shall observe, maintain, and keep, and in all others, so much as in you lieth, do, to be observed. maintained, and kept, all and singular the laudable acts, laws, constitutions, and ordinances made at meetings and councils, for the weal and good government of this borough. The consultations, counsels, secret, and good passages of your brethren, and your own, consulted, conferred on, and happening at your councils, and meetings, you shall utter and disclose to no man; but the said several offices of mavoralty, justice of peace, and quorum, and clerk of the market, whereunto you are elected and chosen, you shall, to the best of your skill and power, well and duly demean yourself. So help you God, and by the contents of this bible."

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>4</sup> Corporation Diary.

The following is the present mode of electing the mayor: On the day of election, which always takes place on the first Monday after St. Bartho- XVIII. lomew's day, the aldermen, being assembled in the council-chamber, choose three of their members to be put in nomination to serve the office—this done. they all retire into the town-hall, where the nomination is proclaimed; they then return to the council-chamber, leaving the three candidates in the hall. where being re-assembled, they, together with the burgesses, elect one of the three to be mayor, which is generally in rotation. However, from the adoption of this mode, it is evident, that by the reduction of three of their brethren, who are thus excluded from voting on this occasion, the choice of the mayor for the ensuing year greatly depends on the burgesses, supposing the whole number to be present; the latter being twelve in number, the former only ten.

#### MEMBERS OF THE CORPORATION.

George Gilbertson, esq. Mayor.

Aldermen.

William Knapp, esq. Martin Annesley, esq. Richard Maul, esq. Charles Poulton, esq. William Blandy, esq. Richard Westbrook, esq. Richard Richards, esq. Launcelot Austwick, esq. John Stephens, esq. William Andrews, esq. William Garrard, esq. Vacant.

Burgesses.

John Simeon, esq. John Blandy, esq. W. B. Simonds, esq. John Bulley, esq. Thomas Sowdon, esq. Robert Harris, esq.

John Richards, esq. Thomas Ward, esq. William Stephens, esq. Henry Deane, esq. Richard Westbrook, jun. esq. William Andrews, jun. esq.

The right hon. lord viscount Sidmouth, high steward. Charles Abbot, esq. steward, or recorder. William Andrews, esq. town clerk, and coroner.

A list of the mayors of Reading, from their first appointment by the charter granted in the 10th year of the reign of Henry VI. to the present time.

Those marked with an asterisk represented the borough in parliament.

Henry VI.

1432 John Kirkley.\*

Simon Porter.\*

Robert Morys.\*

John Kirkby.\*

Thomas Selvyn, or Swaine.

William Hunt.
William Russel.

William Selvyn.

1440 John Veyrd.
Robert Morys.
Simon Porter.
William Selvyn.

Edward Lynacre,\*

William Russel.

William Hunt.+

John Sayers.
John West.

†Thomas Clerk, sen.\*

John Chamberlain.

1450 Simon Porter. Edward Lynacre.

William Rede.\*

The same.

The same.

The same.

John Chamberlain.

Thomas Beke.\*

Thomas Clerke.\*

Thomas Beke.

1460 William Lynacre.\*

Edward IV.

William Rede.

Thomas Clerke.

John Buck.\*

William Rede.

William Lynacre.

William Rede.

John Upston.

Robert Quedhampton.

William Lynacre.

1470 John Upston.

William Perncote.\*

Stephen Donster.

Thomas Beke.

William Lynacre

John Baxter, or Bakester.

The same.

William Lynacre.

Stephen Donster.

John Baxter.

400 mi

1480 Thomas Bye.

John Langham.

Richard Cleche.

Richard III.

John Langham.

The same.

John Baxter,

† In the south aisle of St. Lawrence's church, is a flat stone, inlaid with brass, on which is inscribed the following epitaph:

Hic jacet Willms Hunt, quondam major hujus — Reding, et uxor ejus. Qui quidem Willms obiit 3 die Martis, anno Dmni 1463. Quorum animabus propitietur Deus. Amen.

# Died in his mayoralty.

Henry VII. John Langham. The same. The same. Christian Niclas.\* 1490 The same. John Bakester. The same. Christian Niclas. Richard Cleche. The same. The same. Christian Niclas. Richard Cleche. Christian Niclas. 1500 John Wilcox. Thomas Puckridge. Richard Cleche. John Turner. Thomas Carpenter. Richard Cleche. Thomas Carpenter. Christian Niclas. Thomas Carpenter. Henry VIII. Thomas Carpenter. 1510 William White. William Gifford. William Watte. William Justice. John Pownsar.\* John Hopton. Thomas Bye. William Justice. William Watte. The same. John Hopton. 1520 William Gyfford.

Thomas Bernard.

Richard Hyde.\* Richard Turner. William Gyfford. Thomas Bernard. Richard a Man. Richard Turner. John Vansby. Thomas Bernard. Richard a Man. 1530 Richard Turner. William Style. John Rede. Thomas Bernard. Richard a Man. John White. Richard Turner. Thomas Myrth. Richard Justice.\* 1540 William Edmunds.\* William Burton. Richard Bowyere. Richard Turner. John White. Richard Justice. John Bourne.

Richard Bowyere.

John Bell.

John Buckland.

1550 William Edmunds.

Thomas Aldworth.

John Bourne.\*

Edward VI.

Mary.
Robert Bowyere.
Edward Butler.
John Bell.\*
Thomas Turner.
Thomas Aldworth.\*

CHAP. XVIII.

|        |      | Elizabeth.             | 1 | 1    | Richard Aldworth.   |   |
|--------|------|------------------------|---|------|---------------------|---|
| CHAP.  |      | John Bourne.+          | 7 |      | William Finnemore.  |   |
| XVIII. |      | Robert Bowyere.        | 3 |      | Richard Johnson.    |   |
|        |      | Edward Butler.         |   |      | John Webbe.‡        |   |
|        | 1560 | Thomas Turner.*        |   | 1580 | Thomas Kendrick.    |   |
|        |      | Thomas Conyers.        |   |      | Edward Butler.§     |   |
|        |      | John Bell.             |   |      | Richard Watlington. |   |
|        |      | John Buckland.         |   |      | Elizeus Burges.     |   |
|        |      | John Phipps.           |   |      | Richard Aldworth.   |   |
|        |      | John Kendrick.         |   |      | Richard Turner.     |   |
|        |      | Richard Watlington.    |   |      | William Finnemore.  |   |
|        |      | Thomas Turner.         |   |      | Richard Johnson.    |   |
|        |      | Humphrey Jackson.      |   |      | Thomas Lydoll.      |   |
|        |      | Richard Johnson.       |   |      | Richard Watlington. |   |
|        | 1570 | Robert Bowyere.        |   | 1590 | Robert Harris.*     |   |
|        |      | Thomas Aldworth.       |   |      | Thomas Deane.       |   |
|        |      | John Ockham, recorder. |   |      | Elizeus Burgesse.   |   |
|        |      | William Lydoll.        |   |      | Richard Aldworth.   | > |
|        |      | Richard Watlington.    |   |      | Richard Watlington. | 3 |
|        |      | Edward Butler.         |   |      | Richard Turner.     |   |

† John Bourne died in his mayoralty, on the 15th of December 1558, and was buried in St. Mary's church: on a brass plate preserved in the vestry, is the following inscription:

John Bourne, of Reading, and also Alice his wife,
Continued in marriage years thirty six and one:
In his thirde maioraltie dyd end their honest life,
And lye here engraved under thys marble stone.
One sone they had, and also daughters five,
Of all whose bodyes fayr issue they did see.
In seven weeks space death did theyr lives deprive:
Theyr honest fame here liveth, theyr souls with Christ be.

John Bourne deceased the 15th day of Decemb. Anno 1558. Alice his wife deceased the 29th day of October Anno 1558.

‡ Father to sir William Webbe, salter, lord mayor of London in 1591, and maternal grandfather to archbishop Laud.——Stowe.

§ In the chancel of St. Lawrence's church, on a grey marble slab, is an inscription to the memory of Mr. Edward Butler, and Alice his wife, wherein he is said to have been five times mayor; but we have not been able to discover in what other year he served the office, besides the four times here mentioned.

Robert Reve-Bernard Harrison. Thomas Lydoll. Robert Harris. Thomas Deane. 1630 1600 John Blake. Edward Birmingham. John Webbe. James I. Thomas Turner. Robert Reve. Bernard Harrison. Thomas Lydoll. Richard Gunter. Thomas Deane. 1640 Bernard Harrison. { John Blake. 1610 John Blake. Edward Birmingham. Thomas Turner. Robert Reve. William Maulthus. Roger Knight. Christopher Turner. William Iremonger. Thomas Bateman. Nicholas Gunter. 1650 Walter Bateman. Thomas Turner. 1620 Anthony Knight. Robert Maulthus. Roger Knight. Christopher Turner. Charles I. William Iremonger.

Nicholas Gunter. The same. The same. Thomas Turner.

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Walter Bateman. Thomas Turner. John Newman. William Kendrick. Robert Maulthus. Robert Kent. John Dewell. George Thorne. Anthony Brackstone.+ Richard Burren. ± John Jenning.

Thomas Harrison. Peter Birmingham. Thomas Thatcham. William Brackstone. Simon Dee. George Wooldridge. Richard Halloway. John Harrison.

Commonwealth.

Peter Thorne. James Arnold. William Wilder. John Webb. Henry Frewin. William Mills. Thomas Cope. Richard Alwright.

+ Being a royalist, he was obliged afterwards to compound with the parliament's commissioners for his estate, in the sum of one hundred pounds.

<sup>‡</sup> He was nominated in the charter granted this year.

Richard Halloway.
Joel Stephens.†
Robert James.
Joel Stephens.

Charles II.

Robert James.

George Thorne.

Thomas Seikes.

Thomas Kenton.

Robert Creed.

Thomas Coates.

William Brackstone.

Robert Tyrrell.

1670 Michael Reading.

Thomas Tilleard.

John Blake.

Richard Johnson,

Giles Pocock.

George Goswell.

Samuel House.

Reginald Thornborough.

Henry Heade.

Thomas Harrison.

1680 David Webb.

Francis Tyrrell.

Michael Reading.

John Thorne.

John Blake.

Richard Johnson.

James II.

Richard Johnson.

Giles Pocock.

Hugh Champion.

William and Marv.

Henry Heade.

1690 Francis Tyrrell.

John Thorne.

John Saunders.

John Thorne.

James Quarrington.

Samuel Watlington.

William Moore.

Thomas Oades.

Francis Brown.

Thomas Tyrrell.

1700 Francis Morgan.

Robert Noake.

Ann.

John Merrick, M. D.

William Wilder.

Moses Gill.

Luke Wise.

John Aberv.

Francis Bristow.

Thomas Piercy.

Robert Parran.

1710 Robert Blake.

Samuel Watlington.

Thomas Tyrrell.

John Merrick.

George I.

William Wilder.

Moses Gill.

Luke Wise.

John Abery.

Thomas Piercy.

Robert Parran.

1720 Robert Blake.

Richard Richards.

John Watts.

<sup>†</sup> Parties running very high in this gentleman's mayoralty, he was turned out of the hall in a riotous manner, by a part of his brethren; who elected in his place Mr. H. Frewin; but was soon after restoiced, and his opponents expelled: some of whom were afterwards re-admitted, but the greater part excluded for ever.

William Everett. Luke Wise. John Abery. Thomas Piercy. George II. Richard Richards. John Watts. William Everett. 1730 Jeremiah Iremonger. John Thorne. Thomas Noake. John Abery. Abraham Watlington.+ E. Lambden. John Abery. John Spicer. Thomas Piercy. Richard Richards. William Everett. Jeremiah Iremonger. 1740 John Thorpe. John Abery. Abraham Watlington. John Spicer. Richard Tilleard. William Armstrong. John Dredge. John Harrison. Thomas Flory. John Richards. 1750 John Hocker. H. Austin Deane. Benjamin Armstrong. Richard Fisher. Abraham Watlington. John Spicer.

Richard Tilleard. John Hocker. John Dredge. 1760 John Richards. George III. H. Austin Deane. Richard Fisher. Richard Westbrook. Francis Whitchurch. Richard Tilleard. John Coates. Adam Smith. William Blandy. John Dredge. 1770 John Richards. Richard Fisher. Richard Westbrook. Francis Whitchurch. William Blandy. John Deane. John Everett. E. Skate White. William Knapp. 1st. Thomas Deane. Robert Micklem. 1780 Edward Micklem. Henry Deane. Martin Annesley. 1st John Deane. John Taylor, M. D. Thomas Hanson. John Bulley. Richard Maul. 1st Thomas Gleed. William Knapp. 2d 1790 Thomas Deane.

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<sup>†</sup> This gentleman was an apothecary, and a friend of Ashmole; who says, he was a very good botanist.

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CHAP. XVIII. Robert Micklem.
Henry Deane.
Henry Deane.
Martin Annesley. 2d
John Bulley.
Richard Maul. 2d
Thomas Gleed.
Charles Poulton. 1st
Thomas West.
William Blandy. 1st
Richard Westbrook. 1st
Richard Richards. 1st

Launcelot Austwick. 1st
George Gilbertson. 1st
John Stephens. 1st
Martin Annesley. 3d
Richard Maul. 3d
Thomas Gleed.
Charles Poulton. 2d
1810 William Blandy. 2d
Richard Westbrook. 2d
Launcelot Austwick. 2d
George Gilbertson. 2d

# The Corporation.

#### CHAPTER XIX.

## Of the HIGH STEWARD, and STEWARD or RECORDER.

THESE were originally appointed by the abbot; but whether the former was only an honorary distinction, as at present, is very uncertain; as we find them united, in the decree made in the year 1510, respecting the elections of mayors and burgesses to receive the fines payable to the abbot, and to administer the oath to such as were to be admitted; the under steward, or recorder, however presided in the courts of law; and most probably conducted the civil concerns of the monastery.

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After the dissolution, the appointment of these officers devolved with the civil power on the corporation, who must have required a law officer, like the steward, to preside in their courts; but for what purpose the high steward was appointed, except for the sake of patronage, I have not been able to discover, as no such appointment is authorized by the charter.

In former times, when the small portion of civil or religious liberty allowed the subject, was liable, on the least occasion, to be taken from him, by the arbitrary mandate of a minister; when chartered rights might be annulled, at the will or caprice of the sovereign; and burthensome taxes imposed on the people, to satiate the avarice, or gratify the ambition, of some worthless minion of the crown, it was very natural for corporations to place themselves under the protection of some powerful nobleman, who, by his interest or influence, might, as their high steward, protect them from oppression, and secure them in the enjoyment of the few rights allowed them by the constitution. Accordingly, we find the high steward of this borough, was, at the time of his election, either a favorite of the reigning monarch, or one who took an active part in the administration of the government; such were Cromwell, earl of Essex, in the reign of Henry VIII; the earls of Leicester and Essex,



in that of Elizabeth; the earls of Banbury and Holland, in the reign of Charles I; Bulstrode, lord Whitelock, under Cromwel's usurpation, and the earl of Clarendon, during the reign of Charles II: but since the government has been better administered, and the rights of the sovereign and the people better defined, by the act of settlement and the bill of rights, and liberty secured on the foundation of impartial laws, it has been thought by some of the corporation, unnecessary to have recourse to an officer-who is appointed without the authority of the governing charter-who is invested with no power, nor can render the least assistance to the town, from which he receives his honorary title. Under this idea, the office was left vacant a considerable time; the interval between the death of the last and the election of the present high steward, falling little short of a hundred years; and at last when the question of the appointment came to be agitated in the corporation, it was, if I am rightly informed, carried by a very small majority; not out of any disrespect to the gentleman concerned, for whom every one had the highest opinion; but because such an appointment was thought unnecessary, under the present circumstances. The election may therefore be considered as a revival of the title, rather than the introduction of a new office.

It is difficult to say, what were the original rights of this officer; but, as patronage and protection seem to have been the original motives for the appointment, it is probable these were very few, and may be considered, rather as concessions on the part of the corporation, than as positive prerogatives belonging to, and inherent in the office; for this reason, they were enabled to do much good, as well to individuals of the town, as to the corporate body; while, at the same time, they were debarred from the power of injuring either. Indeed, it is doubtful, whether they possessed any authority that could interfere with the rights of the body corporate; as they never presided at their sessions or councils, or claimed any share in the government of the borough, except in one particular instance, which happened in 1622, when the earl of Wallingford, then high steward, granted a license, on his own authority, to one John Bunsday, to kill flesh meat in the season of lent, that year.\* But, this invasion of their rights, is rather to be imputed to the overbearing disposition of the earl, which he evinced in many other instances, than to any acknowledgment on the part of the corporation, that he, as high steward, possessed any such prerogative.

<sup>\*</sup> It was customary for the corporation, on the approach of lent, to bind all victuallers under a certain penalty, not to kill flesh meat during that season. The number so bound in 1626, was one hundred and fifty-one.

It is true, that in 1539 Thomas lord Cromwell, then high steward of the borough, was present, and gave his consent to the election of the mayor for that year, as appears from the following entry in the diary: "Omnes burgenscs, &c." "All the burgesses of the said borough proceeded to the election of the mayor, with the assent and consent of Thomas lord Cromwell, high steward of the liberties of the aforesaid borough." It might be inferred from this entry that the presence and consent of the high steward was necessary to the election of the mayor; but it should be considered, that prior to this period, the choice of the mayor had been vested in the abbot, whose authority in the town being now at an end, by the suppression of the monastery, it was natural for the corporation to call in their high steward, to give a sanction to this, perhaps, the first exercise of their new prerogative; especially as he was visitor general of all the religious houses, and at this time actually exercising the duties of his office in this town. His presence and assent therefore was merely accidental, and by no means implies the right of interfering on these or any other elections connected with the government of the borough. It may also be observed, that he is styled in this entry, the high steward of the liberties of the borough; in which light only he was always considered, as well by the inhabitants at large as by the corporation, who equally appealed to him on every occasion wherein the interest of individuals in particular, or of the borough in general, were concerned.

of the borough in general, were concerned.

Thus in the case of ship-money, in the reign of Charles I. the corporation instructed the recorder to lay their situation before the earl of Holland, then their high steward, and "to assure him (as they say) of their inability to raise the money, and to pray relief." So in other instances, application was always made to the high steward for his protection, which was seldom if ever denied; and it might be in return for the benefits derived from their influence with the existing governments, as much as from the penury of the borough, that the privilege of nominating one of the representatives, as mentioned in a former chapter, was granted them: they may therefore be considered as the link that united as it were the monarch and the subject together, and thereby rendered that service to their constituents, which it was beyond the power

The high steward was also sometimes consulted on affairs that concerned the interior government of the borough; but his opinion was not in all cases binding, except when approved of by a majority of the corporation: thus in the case of sir Edward Clerke, the recorder of the borough in 1622, who had

of their more subordinate officers to afford them.

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not only taken upon himself to exact exorbitant fees of office, but likewise called upon the corporation for an addition to his salary: On this occasion, having taken the opinion of counsel, they afterwards enclosed it in a letter to the earl of Wallingford, at that time their high steward, requesting him "to fix what salary the recorder should have?" To this his lordship replied, "that he should have six pounds per annum, according to the opinion of the counsel they had sent him."

This decision of the earl, meeting with the approbation of the majority of the corporate body, was immediately complied with; but sir Edward Clerke remaining still dissatisfied, and continuing to exact larger fees than they considered him entitled to, they removed him from his office, by a majority of the principal burgesses, and then proceeded to elect Mr. Saunders into his place: whereupon sir Edward also applied to the earl, to intercede with the corporation on his behalf, who, in compliance with his request, sent a message addressed to the mayor and burgesses, " requesting they would reinstate him in his office:" To which they replied, "they did hope to give his lordship satisfaction, but that it was not in their power to do it:" Not satisfied with this reply, his lordship determined to try the extent of his influence, attended the next court day in person. In the mean while the corporation had drawn up fifteen articles of accusation against the recorder, for extortion; which being publicly read in his lordship's presence, and the question being put to the vote, it was unanimously determined, that " sir Edward Clerke was rightly put out:" and, notwithstanding every effort made, by his lordship, on his behalf, he was not re-admitted to the recordership till the year 1625, and then only in conjunction with Mr. Saunders, who, equally with him, partook of the duties and emoluments of the office, till the renewal of the charter in the reign of Charles I. when, probably by the assistance of archbishop Laud. he procured himself to be nominated the sole recorder.

From these, and other instances that might be adduced, it is evident that the high steward, though looked up to with respect by the corporation, had little influence in their decisions; and, that they considered him only in the light of a patron or protector, from whose high rank they might reap advantage to themselves in their corporate capacity, while at the same time they were cautious to confine his influence within moderate bounds.

Having thus explained the nature of the high steward's office, and the motives for the appointment, as far as the scanty documents we are possessed of will permit, we shall now give some account of the gentlemen who have

had the honor of filling this respectable office, from the first appointment in the reign of Henry VIII. to its suspension in that of George I.

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The dissolution of the monastery, and the consequent addition of power that thereby devolved on the corporation, afforded them an opportunity for the first time of appointing a high steward, in the person of Thomas lord Cromwell, at that time secretary of state, and one of the principal instruments in the reformation of the church. It is uncertain when this election took place; but it probably was in 1539, at which time he attended as high steward, at the election of the mayor; but the corporation did not long enjoy his services, for in the following year he was convicted, without being heard in his defence, by a bill of attainder, for divers heresies and treasons, and condemned to suffer such punishment as his majesty should think proper to direct. Being required to send the king a full account of his transactions, in bringing about the king's marriage with Ann of Cleves, he concluded his answer in the most abject manner, and subscribed himself "a most woful prisoner, ready to take the death when it should please God and his majesty;" yet he added, "the frail flesh incited him continually to call to his grace for mercy for his offences." The letter was dated from the Tower, "this Wednesday the last of June, with the heavy heart and trembling hand of your highness's most heavy and most miserable prisoner and poor slave, Thomas Cromwell."

Below the subscription he wrote, "most gracious prince, I cry for mercy, mercy, mercy:" but mercy not being one of this gracious prince's virtues, he immediately signed the warrant for his execution.

In this transaction we know not which most to deplore, the cruelty of the despot, or the abject servility of the sufferer. When he was brought on the scaffold, his regard for his son is said to have prevented him from asserting his innocence. He thanked God for bringing him to that death for his transgressions; he acknowledged his offences against God and his prince, who had raised him from a low degree\* to high rank in life; confessed he had been seduced, but that now he died in the catholic faith; and after having spent a short time at his own private devotions, submitted his head to the executioner, who, either through fear or malice, mangled him in a most shocking manner.

Thus fell this great minister, who by his own merit had raised himself to the highest offices in the state, and the confidence of the sovereign; but the reputation he had thereby gained, and even the sincerity of his conduct with respect to the part he took in the reformation of religion, were very much diminished by his apostacy at his death.

<sup>•</sup> He is said to have been the son of a blacksmith.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> Smollet.

He is said however to have borne his elevation with great moderation; and the purity of his conduct as a minister, to have been such, that his greatest enemies could not fix the stain of corruption on his character; and even the king is said, when too late, to have lamented his death.

After the death of Cromwell, and during the remainder of this and the two following reigns, the high stewardship of Reading appears to have remained vacant, as no mention is made of such an officer in the corporation records, till 1566, at which time the earl of Leicester was in possession of the title, which he retained twenty-two years, to 1588, when being seized with a fever at Cornbury-lodge, in Oxfordshire, he expired at the time the patent was making for creating him her majesty's lieutenant in the government of Ireland. He was a great favorite with queen Elizabeth, who expressed the deepest sorrow for his death; notwithstanding which, in conformity to the economical system of government she had laid down, she ordered his effects to be sold by public auction, to pay his debts to the crown.

He was succeeded in the stewardship by sir Henry Neville, who was afterwards one of the queen's commissioners for concluding a peace with Spain; but dying in 1594, the corporation nominated the right hon. Robert Devereux, earl of Essex, to be high steward of the borough, with the permission, for the first time, of nominating one of the burgesses to be sent to the next parliament.\*

This nobleman who possessed the same title as the unfortunate Cromwell, their first high steward, was, like him, doomed to loose his head on the scaffold. Thinking himself slighted by the queen, whose favorite he had long been, he attempted, but without success, to stir up an insurrection in the city, and being seized in the prosecution of his plan, he was committed a prisoner to the Tower, from whence he was brought to the bar of the House of Lords, the 19th of February 1601, and being convicted of the crime, was sentenced to be beheaded. Thus this great man—once the minion of fortune—for a long time the favorite of the queen—and always looked up to by the people—fell by the hands of the executioner, who, with three strokes of the axe, severed his head from his body in the thirty-fourth, year of his age.

"He was," according to Smollet, "a nobleman possessed of excellent and amiable qualities; brave, liberal, and humane; a patron of learning, in which he himself had made good progress; a warm friend, and an avowed

<sup>\*</sup> This appears to have been a personal compliment paid to the earl, or rather to her majesty, without any intention, on the part of the corporation, to continue the privilege, though it afterwards became the general custom to grant the nomination of one member, as a part of the prerogative of the high stewardship.

enemy. His follies were, vanity, ambition, and an impetuosity of temper, by which he fell a sacrifice to the artful intrigues of those who dreaded his power and envied his good fortune."

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The earl of Essex was succeeded in the office of high steward by baron Knollys of Grays, afterward created viscount Wallingford, and earl of Banbury. We have already observed, that the reigning features in this gentleman's character were, an inordinate ambition, and a desire to govern the corporation at his pleasure; but though they had hitherto shewn the most submissive respect to the will of their high steward, while he kept within the bounds of moderation, yet when he wanted to arrogate to himself, as we have seen, the nomination of both the members, they very properly resisted the demand, as tending to deprive them of one of their dearest privileges.

When they formerly submitted the choice of one of their representatives to the high steward, the sending members to parliament was considered, rather as a burthen upon the electors, than as a desirable object of ambition for any one, who, however desirous he might be of serving his country, could not be expected to come voluntarily forward to solicit the suffrages of the people for an office neither attended with honor nor emolument, at the same time that the person possessing it was surrounded with difficulties and dangers, from either the cruelty or caprice of the tyrant who happened at the time to possess the throne. But now that the representative system was better understood, and candidates were not wanting to offer their services, even without pay, the corporation began to consider the privilege in a new light, and by thus putting a stop to the encroachments of the high steward, happily preserved the town of Reading from becoming, perhaps, like many others, a close borough.

In consequence of their opposition to his interference in this and other concerns of the corporation, he was so offended, that he resigned the office in disgust; but with the same spirit he had held it, he took upon himself to recommend his successor, in the person of sir Henry Rich, earl of Holland; which, though an encroachment on their prerogative, the corporation readily, as they say, granted; being, no doubt, happy to be released from his interference in their concerns.

The character of sir Henry Rich, as given by his contempories, does not appear to have been of that exalted nature as to have influenced the corporation in the choice of him for their high steward, had they been left to their own option.\*

<sup>\*</sup> Smollet calls him one of James I. worthless favorites; from whose extravagance he accu-

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By his abject submission to the will and caprice of James I. he accumulated a large fortune. During the reign of this monarch, he was sent ambassador to Henry IV. of France, to negotiate a treaty of marriage between the prince of Wales, afterwards the unfortunate Charles I. and the princess Henrietta of France; and, though in the ensuing reign he was made groom of the stole, and received other favors from the monarch, yet at the commencement of the civil wars he united himself to the popular cause, and in 1642 was one of the commissioners appointed by the parliament to treat with the king at Oxford for an accommodation of the existing differences.

In the following year he deserted the parliament, and went over to the king's garrison at Wallingford, and is said to have behaved very gallantly both at the siege of Gloucester and at the battle of Newbury; but on being, on some occasion afterwards, received with coolness by his majesty, he again joined himself to the parliament, from whom he received a pardon for having fought on the side of his benefactor and sovereign.

During the time of his majesty's imprisonment in the Isle of Wight, when the royalists in different parts of the kingdom had taken up arms for the purpose of restoring him to his former authority, the versatile earl of Holland again forsook the cause he had so recently espoused, and raised a small corps in defence of the unhappy monarch whom he had twice before deserted.

With a body of horse, consisting of about one hundred men, he marched to Kingston on Thames, where he was joined by the duke of Buckingham, with his brother the lord Charles Villiers, and the earl of Peterborough, who had collected a small body of infantry. After their junction, they dispatched a messenger with a letter to the lord-mayor and common council of the city of London, declaring their intention of joining the forces of Surrey, Sussex, and Middlesex, in order to set the king at liberty, and establish the peace of the nation.

On receiving the letter, the magistrates, (who, had they been so inclined, could have placed very little confidence in the earl and his associates,) sent it to

mulated a large estate: in corroboration of this assertion, he gives the following anecdote.

"The king being one day in the gallery at Whitehall attended by sir Henry Rich, and James Maxwell, some porters happened to pass, loaded with money for the privy purse. The king perceiving Rich whispering to Maxwell, insisted on knowing what he had said? and being informed, that he expressed a wish that he had so much money, the king immediately ordered the porters to carry the whole sum to Rich's lodgings, saying that he had more pleasure in giving, than the other could possibly have in receiving his bounty."—But Whitelock speaks of him very differently, observing that he was "a noble gentleman, who was as full of generosity and courtship to all sorts of persons, and readiness to help the oppressed, and to stand for the rights of the people, as any person of his quality in this nation."

the parliament, by whom these noblemen were immediately declared traitors and enemies to their country; and colonel Lewesy being sent against them with a superior force, they were the same day attacked and defeated, after a sharp but short conflict, in which Francis lord Villiers was slain. During the subsequent night, the duke, and the earl of Holland, thought fit to abandon Kingston, with the remains of their forces, consisting of about four hundred men, with which they marched to St. Albans, where colonel Scroop soon after coming upon them, by surprise, the earl was taken prisoner, and committed to Warwick castle, from whence, soon after the execution of his royal master, he was brought before the high court of justice, at which Bradshaw presided, when being overcome with age and infirmities, he was unable to make any defence, and was in consequence found guilty, and sentenced to loose his head on the scaffold. This sentence was executed upon him the ninth of March 1649, following, and his death was considered the best atonement he could make, for having so often forsaken his royal master, and benefactor, whom he was bound, by the strongest ties of gratitude and honor, to have constantly supported.\*

The earl of Holland was the third instance, among only six successive high stewards of Reading, who, in less than a century, had died on the scaffold; to whom, if we add archbishop Laud, who had suffered in like manner, we must own, that the corporation had hitherto been very unfortunate in the choice of their patrons.

To the above account of this extraordinary person, we cannot refrain from adding the following sketch of his life, given by the noble historian in his history of the rebellion, as, notwithstanding the author's political bias, it appears to have been faithfully delineated:

"The earl of Holland was a younger son of a noble house, and of a very fruitful bed, which divided a numerous issue between two great fathers: The oldest gave many sons and daughters to the lord Rich; the younger of both sexes to Mountjoy earl of Devonshire. The reputation of his family gave him a great advantage in the world, though his elder brother was earl of Warwick, and owner of a great fortune, and his younger earl of Newport, of a very plentiful revenue likewise. He after some time spent in France betook himself to the wars in Holland, which he intended to have made his profession, where after two or three campaigns, according to the custom of the English volunteers, he came in the leisure of winter to visit his friends



<sup>\*</sup> His titles were Henry earl of Holland, lord chief justice, and justice in eyre of all the forests, chaces, parks, and warrens on this side Trent; first gentleman of the bed-chamber, and knight of the most noble order of the garter.—Rushworth's Collections.

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"He was a very handsome man, of a lovely and winning presence, and gentle conversation, by which he got so easy an admission into the court and grace of king James that he gave over the thought of farther intending the life of a soldier. He took all the ways he could to endear himself to the duke, and to his confidence, and wisely declined, the receiving any grace or favor but as his donation: above all he avoided the suspicion that the king had any kindness for him, upon any account but of the duke, whose creature he desired to be esteemed, though the earl of Carlisle's friend. And he prospered so well in that pretence, that the king scarce made more haste to advance the duke, than the duke did to promote the other.

"He first preferred himself to a wife, the daughter and heir of Cope, by whom he had a good fortune, and amongst other things the manor and seat of Kensington, of which he was shortly after made baron, and he had quickly so entire a confidence in him, that the duke prevailed with the king, to put him about his son the prince of Wales, and to be a gentleman of his bedchamber, before the duke himself had reason to promise himself any proportion of his highness's grace and protection.

"He was then made earl of Holland, captain of the guard, knight of the garter, and privy council; sent the first ambassador into France to treat of the marriage with the queen, or rather privately to treat about the marriage, before he was ambassador; and when the duke went to the Isle of Ree, he trusted the earl of Holland with the command of that army, with which he was to be recruited and assisted.

"In this confidence and this posture he was left by the duke when he was killed, and having the advantage of the queen's good opinion and favor (which the duke never had, nor cared for) he made all possible advances towards the obtaining his trust, and succeeding him in his power; or rather that the queen might have the sole power, and he only be subservient to her; and upon this account, he made a continual war upon the earl of Portland, the treasurer, and all others who were not gracious to the queen, or desired

not the increase of her authority. And in this state, and under this protection, he received every day new obligations from the king, and great bounties, and continued to flourish, above any man in the court, whilst the weather was fair; but the storm did no sooner arise, but he changed so much and declined so fast, from the honor he was thought to be master of, that he fell into that condition, which I shall afterwards have too much cause to enlarge upon."

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Speaking of his death, he says, "the consideration of the petition of the earl of Holland, took up a long debate in parliament: the interest and the interposition of the earl of Warwick his brother was applied, and every presbyterian to a man, was solicitous to preserve him. They urged his merit towards the parliament, in the beginning of the troubles: how much he had suffered in the court for his affection for them; his age and infirmities, which would not suffer him long to enjoy that life they should give him: and the consideration of his wife and children which were numerous. But these arguments stirred up others, to enveigh against his backslidings with the more bitterness, and to undervalue the services he had ever done; to tax his vanities, and his breach of faith.

"When the question was put concerning him, they who were for the negative exceeded the number of the others by three or four votes, Cromwel having more than an ordinary animosity against him, for his behaviour in the beginning of the summer, and for some words of neglect and contempt, he had let fall concerning himself.

"The earl was brought upon the scaffold before Westminster-hall upon the ninth of March 1649, but by his long sickness was so spent, that his spirits served not to entertain the people with a long discourse. He spoke of his religion as a matter unquestionable, by the education he had had, in the religious family of which he was a branch: which was thought a strange discourse for a dying man, who though a son, knew enough of the iniquity of his father's house, which should rather have been buried in silence, than by such an unseasonable testimony, have been revived in the memory and discourse of men. He took more care to be thought a good friend to parliament, than a good servant to his master, and was thought to have said too little of his having failed in his duty to him, which most men believed to be the source from whence his present calamity sprung. He was a very well bred man, and fine gentleman in good times, but too much desired to enjoy ease and plenty, when the king could have neither; and did think poverty the most insupportable evil that could befall any man in the world.

"He was then so weak that he could not have lived long; and when his head was cut off very little blood followed."

Upon the decease of this nobleman, the corporation appear to have been at a loss on whom to confer the vacant honor. The nobility, to whom they had hitherto looked up for protection, were either dispersed or without influence with the ruling party, and little confidence could be placed in commoners, who, amidst the jarring interests which at that period convulsed the republic, were every moment in danger of being thrown from the pinnacle of power to which they had aspired. It was on this account, probably, that the office was suffered to remain vacant till 1654, when they elected colonel Robert Hammond, at that time governor of the town, to be their high steward.

The choice of this gentleman seems to have been as much dictated by prudence as that of any of their former high stewards, he being the creature and confident of Cromwel, as well as governor of the town, and in consequence was more capable than any other of affording them that protection they had always sought by the nomination.

Colonel Hammond had been appointed governor of the Isle of Wight, by the parliament, in 1647; which situation he held at the time Charles effected his escape from Hampton-court, with an intent to leave the kingdom; for this purpose his majesty directed his route through Hampshire to the sea coast, but being disappointed of the vessel which was to have conveyed him to Jersey, he was prevailed upon by his attendants to pass over to the Isle of Wight. But Charles being justly apprehensive of the treatment he might receive from the governor, whom he knew to be wholly in the interest of his enemies, sent Ashburnham forward to exact from him a promise, that if he could not protect he would not detain his majesty. Hammond expressed his inclination to serve the king, but added at the same time, that he was under the necessity of obeying his superiors.

When he understood where the king was, he accompanied them to Titch-field, with a guard of soldiers, and staid in an apartment below, whilst Ash-burnham went up to his majesty's chamber. Charles no sooner heard that colonel Hammond was in the house, than he exclaimed "Oh Jack thou hast undone me!" and Ashburnham immediately, seeing his error, burst into tears, and would have gone down and dispatched the colonel, had not his majesty prevented him—on so small a thread does the lives of those hang who become agents in civil dissentions.

Hammond conducted the king to the Isle of Wight, and confined him in

<sup>3</sup> Smollet's History of England.

Carisbrook castle, where he remained till the following year, when Cromwel ordered Hammond to deliver him up to colonel Eure, who conducted him to Hurst-castle; and Hammond, for his readiness in obeying the order, was soon after made governor of Reading, which post he enjoyed but a short time, dying in 1656, and was succeeded in the office of high steward by the honorable Bulstrode Whitelock, one of the lords commissioners of the treasury under Cromwel's administration; in which year "a certificate was signed by the company, whereunto the common seal was put testifying the election; with which Mr. Mayor and certain of his brethren attended his lordship with."

Снар. ХІХ.

Whitelock was a lawyer of great eminence; and though he appears to have been much in the confidence of Cromwel, was a man of strict honor and integrity, unimpeachable in his public character, and the most impartial historian that ever recorded the events of his own times. When Cromwel became desirous of assuming the regal character, Whitelock dissuaded him from the attempt, by the most powerful arguments, which though not "perfectly satisfactory to his highness," were sufficient to induce him to abandon the idea, which he found from this instance to be equally disapproved of by his civil as well as military officers.

In a long conversation that passed between Cromwel and Whitelock respecting the office and title of king, which Cromwel aimed at, the latter made use of such forcible arguments to dissuade him from the measure, and to enter into treaty with the king, that Cromwel, to avoid coming to a decision, put an end to the conversation, by saying, "I have not, I assure you, the least distrust of your faithfulness and friendship to me, and to the cause of the common-wealth, and I think you have much reason for what you propound, but it is a mater of so high importance and difficulty, that it deserves more time of consideration and debate, than is at present allowed us; we shall therefore take further time to discourse of it.2".\*\*

Notwithstanding the guarded manner in which Whitelock had expressed his opinions, and advice in this conversation, and the apparent approbation with which they were received by Cromwel, it is certain he never again recovered

<sup>\*</sup> It is remarkable, that in the conference held with Cromwel some years afterwards by a committee of the commons whereof Whitelock was one, to request him to take the title of king, Whitelock makes use of the same arguments that Cromwel himself used in this conference, and Cromwel gives much the same answers against the proposal as Whitelock did in the above conversation; but, says a contemporary writer, "Whitelock and the rest had then learned what was the real aim of this aspiring commander, and so gave him an opportunity to save appearances, by refusing that crown when offered him, which he had before so openly confessed himself desirous of wearing."

<sup>1</sup> Corporation Diary.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup> Whitelock's Memorials.

CHAP. XIX. his favor, and was, not long after, sent into honorable banishment under the pretext of an embassy to Sweden.

Whitelock was a member of the long parliament, but it does not appear that he took any part in the king's death. He was afterwards nominated by the house one of the council of state, consisting of forty members, appointed for the government of the new common-wealth. He was also a commissioner of the treasury, and afterwards keeper of the great seal. After the restoration, he retired to his seat near Henley, where he resided till his death.

On the fifth of February 1674, the office of high steward for this borough was conferred on the earl of Clarendon, son of the chancellor, whose father had done and suffered so much for his ungrateful master Charles II. who permitted him at last to die an exile in France. He was brother-in-law to James II. and uncle to the queens Mary and Ann. He was appointed lord lieutenant of Ireland by James II. but being a protestant, and shewing an unwillingness to promote the king's designs against the church, he was soon after superseded by the earl of Tyrconnel, a rigid papist.

At the revolution in 1688, he joined the friends of the former government, and refused to take the oaths to king William. In 1690, he entered into the conspiracy for the restoration of the abdicated monarch to the throne, but the plot being discovered, he was committed prisoner to the Tower, where he remained several months, but was afterwards, through the mediation of queen Mary, permitted to reside in his own house, where he died in 1707.\*

He was succeeded in the office of high steward of Reading, by the earl of Cadogan in —. This nobleman was a general of the king's forces; colonel of the first regiment of foot guards; governor of the Isle of Wight; master of the robes, and a member of the privy council. His titles were in 1716, first, baron of Reading, afterwards, baron Cadogan of Oakley, viscount Caversham, and earl of Cadogan. He died June 3d, 1726; from which period the office of high steward for Reading was suffered to lie dormant till the year 1798, when it was conferred on the present high steward, the right honorable lord viscount Sidmouth, soon after made one

<sup>\*</sup> The last of this family in the female line, was Mr. John Hyde Badger, a gentleman farmer at Shinfield, in this neighborhood, well known for his knowledge in the mathematics. The family house in which he resided was moated round in the ancient style, and the hall was hung with every species of offensive and defensive armor, the remains of the civil war in the seventeenth century. Being a descendant of the great lord Clarendon, he possessed many relics of the family, among which were a curious pair of gloves worn by the chancellor when he went to court, and several articles that once belonged to queen Ann. This gentleman died in 1790, and was buried in the family vault at Shinfield.

of his majesty's principal secretaries of state, and a member of the privy council. Previous to his election, he was presented by the corporation with the freedom of the borough in an elegant gold box.

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## STEWARD OR RECORDER.

The steward, or as he is now stiled the recorder, differs from the high steward, in being expressly appointed in the charter, and the choice confined to his being "a discreet man, learned in the law, and fit," which is not necessary in the high steward; they are also removable at the pleasure of a majority of the corporation, which the others are not; at least no instance of the kind appears with respect to the high stewards, while, in addition to that of sir Edward Clerke already mentioned, may be added that of Daniel Blagrave, esq. who was also dismissed from his office of recorder, by the corporation.

In the sixth of Elizabeth, the corporation drew up the following schedule of the duties to be performed by the steward, which they caused to be entered in their journals.

"Imprimis, That he, or his sufficient deputy, shall be present at every court, to see justice indifferently administered to all parties.

"Item, That he make out, in the mayor's name, all precepts, warrants, attachments, distringas, and levies according to the order of the law.

"Item, That he, as in him shall lie, shall foresee, that the said mayor in all things be saved harmless, as well concerning the execution of the court, as the execution of the clerk of the market, and also as justice of the peace, so that the said mayor will be advised by him.

Item, That he in all causes, concerning the commonalty of the hall, as return of writs for the parliament, supplications and letters, be general solicitor, and in all causes concerning the mayor and burgesses and commonalty of the hall, as well within the town as without, so that always if he be about any such business forth of the town his costs and charges always to be borne, that is to say, for every day, two shillings and eight pence.

Item, that he shall well register all processes of court, inquisitions taken before the clerk of the market, and all other things requisite to the said mayor, in any office which to him doth appertain; and that he shall make out extracts thereof accordingly.

Item, That he shall keep the audit belonging to the said hall, and the same shall register and engross from year to year.

Item, He shall make proclamations directed to the said mayor.

Item, He shall enter and register all acts and elections of mayors, and all other officers from time to time yearly."

CHAP. XIX. The salary of this officer was originally forty shillings per annum, but in 1624 it was raised to six pounds; in addition to which he was entitled to the following fees:

" He shall take of every inhabitant within the borough, for entry of his plaint one penny.

Item, For every stranger for the same two pence.

Item, For putting in of any declaration where the action is under forty pence, and for the answer of the same, he shall take nothing.

Item, For putting in of any declaration where the action is forty pence and above, if he be a townsman one penny, if a stranger two pence. And for an answer of a townsman one penny, of a stranger two pence.

Item, For making every levy four pence.

Item, For making every distress of a town dweller one penny, of a stranger two pence.

Item, For making every warrant of the peace four pence.

Item, For every recognizance twenty pence.

Item, Of every burgess at his first entry, for registering his name, four pence."

Most of these functions are now performed by the town clerk, who is necessarily a law officer. He attends the corporation in all their sittings, and advises the mayor in all cases of importance that come before him as a magistrate. The recorder's duties are now principally confined to attending on the chief magistrate at the quarter sessions for the borough, where he presides as judge, and is on all occasions considered as standing counsel for the corporation. At his entrance into office he was required to take the following oath:

"I shall duly and justly do and execute the office of the stewardship of the borough of Reading, and the liberties of the same; and I shall well and faithfully execute and do, all things concerning the court holden before the mayor and head burgesses, that belongeth to my office, during the time that I shall continue steward there. And to all matters that may be for the common-wealth and profit of the said borough and guild, I shall truly aiding, helping and assisting be, to the utmost of my power, according to my knowledge and cunning. The secret counsel and common counsel of the said guild and fellowship of the same I shall keep close and secret, nor it to any person publish, shew, or declare, except it be to the head burgesses of the said borough, all these things shall I do, so God help me, and by this book."

## High Stewards and Recorders from the 30th of Henry VIII. to the present time.

CHAP: XIX.

| Anno. | High Stewards.                      | Stewards or Recorders.              |
|-------|-------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| 1539  | Cromwell, earl of Essex, beheaded.  | Mr. John Ocham.                     |
| 1566  | The earl of Leicester               |                                     |
| 1588  | Sir Henry Neville                   |                                     |
| 1594  | Devereux, earl of Essex, beheaded.  |                                     |
| 1601  | Knollys, earl of Wallingford.       | Sir Edward Clerke.                  |
| 1622  |                                     | The same & Saunders, esq. M. P.     |
| 1630  | Richard, earl of Holland, beheaded. | Sir Thomas Mainwaring, esq.         |
| 1638  |                                     | Sir Edward Clerke.*                 |
| 1645  |                                     | Daniel Blagrave, esq. M. P.         |
| 1654  | Colonel Robert Hammond.             |                                     |
| 1656  | Bulstrode, lord Whitelock.          | Richard Bulstrode, esq.             |
| 1658  |                                     | Daniel Blagrave, esq.               |
| 1674  | The second earl of Clarendon.       | Sir Thomas Holt.                    |
| 1694  |                                     | John Dalby, esq.                    |
| 1700  |                                     | Thomas Pettit, esq.                 |
| 1725  | The earl of Cadogan, -              | Richard Pottinger, esq. M. P.       |
| 1739  |                                     | Charles Hopson, esq.                |
| 1765  | - •                                 | John Dalby, esq.                    |
| 1768  |                                     | T. Septimius Dalby, esq.            |
| 1779  |                                     | John Simeon, esq.                   |
| 1798  | The right hon. Henry Addington.     |                                     |
| 1807  | • •                                 | J. Gleed esq. vice Simeon resigned. |
| 1812  |                                     | C. Abbot, esq. vice Gleed resigned. |

<sup>\*</sup>This gentleman was appointed steward in the charter granted by Charles I. 17th December 1638. Mr. Ashmole says, "Sir Thomas Mainwaring, recorder of Reading, was knighted in 1643;" if so, he must have succeeded sir Edward Clerke. Sir Thomas resided at Bradfield-park, where it is probable he died about the year 1647, as on the 20th of June that year Ashmole informs us the "Lady Mainwaring gave him a ring enamelled with black, whereon was this posy. A true friend's gift. On the 3d of the following July, he adds, she entered on her jointure lands, and on the 30th, about two hours post meridiam (as I was afterwards told) the lady Mainwaring's second son, Mr. Humphrey Stafford, suspecting I should marry his mother, broke into my chamber where I was confined to my bed with a violent fever, and had like to have killed me, but Christopher Smith withheld him by force; for which all persons exceedingly blamed him, in regard it was thought I was near death, and knew nobody."

The young gentleman's suspicions however were not entirely groundless, as appears from the following extracts from this curious diary:

By the ruling charter the corporation are empowered to appoint four other law officers called attornies of the court, "to prosecute and defend all actions commenced and complaints levied in the said court of record;" but this exclusive right is now done away by the existing laws respecting attornies—the courts being now free to all indiscriminately. Insignificant as this privilege must have been at all times, it was thought of so much consequence in the reign of Charles I. that in 1642, when the king's troops were in possession of the town, he sent by sir Arthur Aston the governor a preremptory message to the mayor and burgesses to discharge Henry Bradley from being an attorney in their court, and to elect Francis Sykes in his room, which was done accordingly.<sup>2</sup>

The inferior officers appointed by the corporation are the crier of the court, who is generally one of the sergeants, three sergeants at mace, the town crier, who also collects the tolls on market and fair days, except that of corn, which is usually farmed to the best bidder; a keeper of the town bridewell, and a game-keper.

They have a common seal on which the town arms are engraved, inscribed round the verge + s. communitatis radingle, but of no particular interest except for its antiquity.

The mace is silver gilt, embossed with the king's arms surmounted with a crown. After the execution of Charles I, the old mace was ordered to be sold, and a new one made with the arms of the common-wealth; this was again disposed of at the restoration, and the present one substituted in its place. It is always carried before the mayor on public occasions; and while the court is sitting at the quarter sessions, it is placed on a table before the presiding magistrate, on a velvet cushion.

From the above view of the rise, progress, and power of the corporation, it appears to have been founded on the strictest principles of the constitution of the country, and calculated to secure the rights and privileges of the inhabitants from violence.

In no part of the country is justice more fairly and impartially administered, or the police conducted with less expense to the community, as except

<sup>&</sup>quot; May 22. The lady Mainwaring sealed me a lease of the park at Bradfield, worth - per ann."

<sup>&</sup>quot;29th. The lady Mainwaring sealed me a lease of the field mead, worth fifty pounds per annum."

<sup>&</sup>quot;November the sixth, having several times before made application to the lady Mainwaring in way of marriage, this day, eleven hor: seven minutes ante merid: she promised me not to marry any man, unless myself."

<sup>&</sup>quot; November the sixteenth, eight hor: ante merid: I married the lady Mainwaring."

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>4</sup> Corporation Diary,

the appointment of the night watch, which is paid by the voluntary subscription of the inhabitants in each parish, the whole is defrayed by the corporation.

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All that is required from the inhabitants, is to serve on parish offices, and juries at the town sessions, as well as the market and coroner's juries, for which, as the town is a county within itself, they are exempt from serving on juries either at the assizes or county courts, which are frequently attended with great inconvenience and expense to the parties, who may be called to a distant part of the county to attend them. They are likewise exempt from paying the county rates, which are at all times very con siderable.

## Charitable Donations.

## CHAPTER XX.

Those marked with an asterisk are not in the returns made to parliament by the three parishes.

Снар.

FEW country towns in the united kingdom can, we believe, boast of greater or more beneficial charities than the borough of Reading, whether we consider them in the aggregate, or in their separate application. In every instance the donors have considered either the present advantage, or future benefit of almost every class of its inhabitants: schools and exhibitions have been provided for the junior classes, loans without interest, workshops rent free for the industrious, and alms-houses for the aged and infirm.

The greater part of the charities bequeathed at different periods still remain, and are applied according to the intentions of the respective donors; but some have been lost in the confusion of the civil wars, and the changes in the government subsequent to the reformation; and some, if we believe Mr. alderman Watts, in a work which he published called "The Black Scene opened," have been diverted from their original application, for the purpose of enriching some of the members of the then existing corporation; but this gentleman's statement ought not to be implicitly relied on. The charges of peculation which he has brought against his brethren in the corporation could not altogether have arisen from a conviction of their truth, because he must have known, that many of them were without foundation, and others, according to his own account, took their rise as far back as 1643, for which his brethren could not be answerable. When he notices the deficiences that have from time to time arisen in the different charitable funds, he ought in fairness to have stated, that in the reign of Charles I. while that monarch kept a garrison here, the corporation, to relieve the distresses of the inhabitants, mortgaged the greater part of their estates, amounting to upwards of three thousand pounds, which could only have been redeemed after a length of time by the surplus revenue arising from the different charities. Mr. Watts ought certainly to have made himself better acquainted with the facts before he brought his charges against the corporation, whose greatest delinquency

seems to have arisen from the inattention of their officers, in not regularly keeping their accounts, so as to have been able to shew, at one view, in what manner the different sums had been applied. For want of this necessary regulation, they were obliged to sit down under the odium of a charge, which, however unfounded, has not been erased from the minds of the common people, always ready to embrace every accusation brought against their rulers. but never capable of being convinced of an error. That there had been no mismanagement of the charitable funds from the year 1643, the period when he commences his charges, to 1749, when he published them, is what no man who considers the frailty of human nature, and the numerous persons through whose hands the funds must have passed in that space of time, can assert; but to suppose on the other hand, that a succession of the most respectable gentlemen of the town, for of such only the corporation has always been composed, could be so systematically base and wicked, as to convert to their own use what was entrusted to their care for charitable purposes, is as unwarrantable as uncharitable. There are, there is no doubt, bad men in all communities, but to admit the charges alleged by Mr. Watts against the corporation of 1749, is to suppose, that not merely one or two individuals but the whole were corrupt, it being impossible for any one among them to appropriate to his own use one sixpence of the public charities without the consent of the whole.

1445

of the care the corporate body have at all times taken for their preservation.

(\*) The first charitable institution on record in Reading was, the foundation of the free school by John Thorne, the 28th abbot, who, at the request of Henry VII. converted to this purpose an old alms-house for poor sisters, with all the revenues thereof; to what amount these were we are not told; but Mr. William Dene, as Leland informs us, a rich man, and servant to the abbey, gave two hundred marks towards the advancement of the same, as appeared, he says, from his epitaph in the abbey church.

After all, perhaps, the number, and present flourishing state of the charities, of which the following is as correct a list as could be procured, is the best proof

1477

John Leche, otherwise John of the Larder, from the post he held in the abbey, left by will tenements and lands, within the borough, with all debts owing to him, for the purpose of building three alms-houses, for women, in addition to five others erected by him in his life time, for the accommodation of eight poor people, who were to have thirteen shillings and four pence each per year, or more, if the charity would allow of an increase. The men to have a new coat, and the women a new gown once in three years. Vested in the corporation.

1554

These alms-houses are in the Butts. Those for the men were re-built in 1775, and those for the women in 1790. The latter are increased to four, and they all receive twenty pence per week.

Sir Thomas Whyte, lord mayor of London, and a native of this town,\* purchased Gloucester Hall in Oxford, for scholars and students to receive there the benefit of learning, "but his private thoughts very often soliciting him that he should (in time) meet with a place where two elms grew, and that there his further purpose should take effect. At length he found out the place where (at his own costs and expense) he founded the famous college called St. John the baptist's college, and where these two elms (as I have learned) are yet standing."

Though this gentleman was not the founder of the free-school, as some have supposed, he was a great benefactor to it, by endowing it with two exhibitions to this college; but as we have already given an account of these in another part,<sup>2</sup> we shall now only mention a further instance of his munificence, as related by Stowe, as extraordinary for the magnitude of the charity as unprecedented in the method he adopted to extend its benefit to every place with which he had been any ways connected:

"Then according to his will, which remaineth yet to be seen, out of this bountiful gift to Bristol, these memorable branches and benevolences were by himself devised, and thus ordered, beginning in the year 1577, and so thenceforward they went on, according to his own direction. Then on the feast of St. Bartholomew, was brought to Merchant-taylors-hall one hundred and four pounds, the hundred pounds to be lent for ten years space to four poor young men in the city of York, freemen and inhabitants, being clothiers, and the four pounds overplus, to be employed about the charges and pains, that no man used in the business might receive discontentment.† Then in 1578 the

\*Fuller, in the 30th page of his second alphabet of his Worthies of England, printed at London 1662, folio, makes him to be born at Rixmansworth, or Rixmeresworth, in Hertfordshire, and is followed in this error by sir Henry Chauncy, in his History and Antiquities of that County, pag. 481. But, contrary to these two, Mr. Griffin Higgs, at first fellow of St. John's college, and afterwards fellow of Merton college, in Oxford, who wrote sir Thomas White's Life (who died the 11th of February 1566) has fixed the place of his nativity at Reading.—Ashmole.

Fuller probably followed Stowe in his Survey of London, wherein he says, "Sir Thomas White, merchant-taylor, sonne to Thomay White, of Rickmansworth, in Hertfordshire." He was sheriff of London in 1547, and lord mayor 1553.

† The 41. surplus was formerly employed to defray the expenses of the mayor in going to London to receive the legacy, but as the money is now paid without being attended with any expense, the mayor, it is said, ought not, to appropriate it to his own use, particularly as the persons to whom the twenty-five pounds each are lent, now pay the expenses of their bonds, contrary to the will of the donor, who expressly says, the money shall be lent without deductions.

<sup>1</sup> Stowe's Survey of London.





from ar original in the Council Chamber ?



like sum was to be delivered thence to Canterbury, and so thenceforward the same sums yearly to the cities and towns following:

Снар.

| In 1576 to Bristol.      | In 1588 to Lincoln.   |
|--------------------------|-----------------------|
| 1577 — York.             | 1589 — Winchester.    |
| 1578 — Canterbury.       | 1590 — Oxford.        |
| 1579 — Reading.          | 1591 — Hereford East. |
| 1580 — Merchant Taylors. | 1592 — Cambridge.     |
| 1581 — Gloucester.       | 1593 — Shrewsbury.    |
| 1582 — Worcester.        | 1594 — Lynn.          |
| 1583 — Exeter.           | 1595 — Bath.          |
| 1584 — Salisbury.        | 1596 — Derby.         |
| 1585 — West Chester.     | 1597 — Ipswich.       |
| 1586 - Norwich.          | 1598 — Colchester.    |
| 1587 — Southampton.      | 1599 — Newcastle.     |
|                          |                       |

"This sum of one hundred and four pounds passing thus yearly to the forenamed places, is delivered still at the Merchant-taylors Hall, and to the good intended uses of the giver; and that there might be no breathing while for so just a steward's talent, but to have it still kept in continual employment for the poor, the same order was appointed to take beginning again as before, while the world endureth, to the towns before named, in the self same courses it had in the original, with great care and observance in them to whom it belongeth, that the dead may not be abused, nor poor men's rights injured."

It appears, from the foregoing list, that the first payment to Reading was in 1579, which returning every twenty-fourth year in rotation, the ninth payment should have been in 1795, but it did not take place till 1798. This was occasioned by the troubles during the civil war in the 17th century, for the fourth payment becoming due in 1651, should have been then discharged; but the corporation did not receive it till three years after, and that only in consequence of frequent applications. The total of the money already received from this benefaction is one thousand pounds.\* If therefore this sum be applied, according to the intentions of the donor, forty tradesmen, inhabitants of Reading, are entitled to the free loan of twenty-five pounds each, for ten years; at the end of which period it should go to forty others, and so on for ever, increasing every twenty-four years. The next payment of the £104

<sup>\*</sup> When the accounts were made up in 1666, of the four hundred pounds then received, 275% was lent to eleven persons at 25% each, 25% remained in the chamberlain's hands undisposed of, and the remaining 100% was owing by the corporation.——Diary.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> Appendix D.

will be in 1822; and the one hundred pounds principal money, according to the above rotation of twenty-four years, supposing none of it to have been lost or misapplied, would return to the corporate body, to be re-lent to industrious tradesmen, at the following periods. viz.

| Of the 1st hundred | pounds in | 1819 | Of the 6th hun | dred pound | s in 1822 |
|--------------------|-----------|------|----------------|------------|-----------|
| 2d -               | -         | 1823 |                |            | 1816      |
| 3 <b>d</b>         | _         | 1817 | 8th            | •          | 1820      |
| 4th -              | •         | 1824 | 9th -          |            | 1824      |
| 5th                |           | 1818 | 10th           | -          | 1818      |

In the council chamber is the portrait of sir Thomas Whyte, in his alderman's gown and gold chain, with the following inscription:

Thomas White, miles, aldermanus civitatis London.
natus apud Readinge in comitatu Berks. Fundator
Collegii Sancti Johannis Baptisti et Aulæ Gloucestriæ
Oxon. Cum 24 civitates et villas hujus regni Anglie
suis ditasset operibus, obiit anno Domini 1566.
Ætatis suæ 72.

Auxilium meum a Domino.

Underneath,

A worthy benefactor, who gave to this town of Reading and to other cities and towns, every 24 years, £104. and more to this town he gave two fellowships in St. John Baptist's College, Oxon, for ever.

- (\*) Mr. Robert Boyer, tanner of Reading, by will dated June 24th 1576, gave to the mayor and burgesses, in trust for the use of the poor, all his lands, tenements and hereditaments in the parish of Burghfield; the proceeds of which are not now known, or how applied.
- Mr. Augustine Knapp of Rotherfield Peppard, Oxon, yeoman, by will dated November 26, 1602, gave to the mayor and burgesses, in trust, the sum of twenty pounds, to buy a stock for the employment of the poor for ever in work. He also gave twenty shillings yearly, out of lands at Rotherfield Grays, to the church-wardens of the parish of St. Giles, to be bestowed by them on the cloathing of poor, lame, blind, or impotent people, within the said parish, on the eve of the feast of All Saints, for ever.
- 1605 (\*) William Palmer, of Southstoke, Oxon, esq. gave by will an annual rent of forty shillings for the use of the poor. Vested in the corporation.

(\*) Mr. John Noyse of Shinfield, Berks, by will dated the 24th of June 1605, gave to the corporation a rent charge of twenty shillings a year out of the rent of a meadow called Lovan's-mead, alias Loffan's-mead, for what purpose is not mentioned.

CHAP. XX.

(\*) Mr. Thomas Lydall, by will, dated March the 6th 1606, gave to the church-wardens of St. Lawrence's parish, ten shillings annually, out of a tenement in Friar-street, towards repairing the church-seats, and bells; and also ten shillings annually to the preacher, out of the same tenement; and for the payment thereof, he vested in the corporation all his other tenements in the same street, and the surplus of the profits to be bestowed upon the relief of such poor people, and fatherless children, as from time to time shall be relieved and kept in the hospital.\*

1606

Mr. Thomas Deane, clothier of Reading, by will, dated June the 25th 1606, gave a rent charge of three pounds, on an estate, now belonging to the right hon, lord Braybrooke, at Ruscombe Berks, to be bestowed on the poor of Reading, in bread, for ever; that is to say, upon St. Thomas's day, twenty dozen, on Good-Friday twenty dozen, and upon Ascension-eve twenty dozen. Vested in the church-wardens of St. Giles.

Mr. John Ball, of Shinfield, Berks, yeoman, by will dated September 26, 1608, gave to the poor of this town twenty pounds, to purchase stock for their employment. Vested in the corporation.

1608

(\*) Mr. Joseph Carter, of Reading, bell-founder, gave by will to the corporation, twenty shillings a year, for the use of the poor, and orphans in the hospital, payable out of two tenements, over against St. Edmund Chapel, in Reading.

1609

Mr. Edward Kemys, of London, merchant, by will dated May the 15th, 1609, gave to the mayor and burgesses fifty pounds, to purchase an annuity to be distributed among twenty-four poor people, at three shillings and four pence This sum of fifty pounds was laid out on the purchase of each per annum. land, which produces four pounds per annum.

1610

Mr. Thomas Deane, by indenture dated the 25th of March 1610, gave one hundred and sixty pounds, to be laid out in the purchase of land, for the support of two poor men, not less than fifty-five years of age; and of three fatherless children, under the age of ten, and to remain till they were sixteen. The men and boys were to be kept and placed in the hospital (now the townbridewell) called the Grey Friars, and when a vacancy happened, it was to be filled up by the corporation, in whom the gift was vested, within the space

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of ten days. The men to have fifty-two shillings per annum each, and the remainder to be for the maintenance of the children. The lands purchased produce the annual sum of ten pounds eight shillings.

Mr. James Pocock, by will dated September 25, 1610, gave to the mayor and burgesses twenty-five pounds, for the purchase of land; the rent and profits whereof were to be expended in the purchase of eight shirts and eight shifts, of two shillings value each; of which, five shirts and five shifts were to be distributed to ten poor people of Reading, of the best characters, on the second Sunday in December, yearly, and the remaining three shirts and three shifts were to be given to the poor of Frilsham, Berks, the first year, and to the poor of Yattenden the second year, and so on interchangeably in future. The mayor or his assignees to have six-pence, and the church-wardens of Frilsham or Yattendon four pence each, to see the same properly executed.—With this sum of twenty-five pounds, and a part of Mr. Deane's money, some houses were purchased in Sieviers'-street; but these soon after being burnt down at the siege of Reading, the number of shirts and shifts was reduced to six.

(\*) Mr. Richard Turner, of Reading, clothier, by will dated October 20th, 1610, gave ten pounds to the corporation, a tenement in the Old-ward, and five pounds to furnish the hospital for the benefit of the poor.

Mr. Nicholas Russel, of Shinfield, Berks, by his will dated February 25, 1611, gave a yearly annuity of thirteen shillings and four pence, out of a house in Minster-street, and a garden plot in Hosiers'-lane, to be paid on St. Thomas's day, for ever, to the church-wardens of St. Mary's, to be by them immediately bestowed on the poor of that parish.

John Blagrave, esq. by will dated 30th of June, 1611, gave a rent charge to the corporation, in trust, to pay annually one shilling each to twenty poor people of St. Mary's parish, twenty of St. Lawrence's, and six of St. Giles's.

He likewise gave fifty shillings yearly, to be divided among twenty poor housekeepers, and forty shillings a year among twenty poor widows of the parish of St. Mary.

He moreover gave in trust to the corporation a rent charge of ten pounds yearly, for ever, on an estate at Swallowfield, to be paid on Good Friday; out of which they are to pay to the vicar of St. Lawrence's parish, ten shillings for a sermon on that day; six pounds thirteen and fourpence to one poor maid servant, out of either of the three parishes, to be decided by the cast of dice; twenty shillings to be distributed, after the sermon, among sixty of the poorest householders of St. Mary's parish, who are to accompany the poor maid, who hath the twenty nobles that day to her house; and the ringers

1611

are to have three shillings and four-pence, to ring a peal while she is returning home, and the clerk of the parish and the youngest church-warden are to have three shillings and four-pence each, for their care and pains to be taken in the business, exclusive of the sermon and fees.\* Every fifth year one is to be admitted out of the hamlet of Southcot, where the donor resided. The losing candidates on this occasion receive a part of Mr. Annesley's gift.

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Mr. Edward Hamblin, of Tilehurst, yeoman, by indenture dated February 1st, 1613, gave a rent charge of four pounds per annum, out of eight acres of arable and pasture ground, called South-moor, in the parish of Burghfield, for the term of one thousand years. Vested in the corporation for the relief of poor men; two or three of whom at least to be butchers.

1613

Mr. John Johnson, of Reading, mercer, by will dated September 2, 1614, gave fifteen pounds, in trust, to the church-wardens of St. Lawrence's parish, on condition that they should, yearly, for ever, pay ten shillings towards the repairs of the church and bells; and ten shillings to the vicar, yearly, to preach a sermon at morning prayers, on the feast day of St. John, for ever.

1614

He likewise gave them twenty pounds, to provide bread to the value of twenty-two shillings annually, to be distributed among the poor at the end of morning prayers, on the same day, for ever, "provided always the clerk and sexton shall have twelve pence a piece in bread yearly, on condition that they keep the gift in memory, remember the preacher, cause the church-wardens to provide the bread, and fetch it in readiness for the poor accordingly."

These two sums, making together thirty-five pounds, were laid out in 1617 on the purchase of a house in Fisher-row, opposite the wool-hall,† which produced at the time only forty shillings per annum, but has been since increased to three pounds eleven shillings and four-pence annually, according to the return made to the house of commons.

He also gave ten pounds towards raising a fund to provide wood or other fuel for the poor of St. Lawrence's parish every winter, to which the parish-

† The wool-hall, where Mr. Farrer's house now stands.

<sup>\*</sup> The following is the method observed, in determining who is to have the twenty nobles: Three girls, one out of each parish, who must have lived at least five years in one place, appear on Good Friday before the corporation, in the council-chamber, where they throw dice, and she who has the highest number, is to receive the money, and is attended home by the losing candidates, for whom the master or mistress generally provides a dinner: the next year the two who lost attend again, with one more, but if either loose three successive years, she is incapacitated from trying again. It it lucky money, for I never heard but the maid that won the prize, suddenly had a good husband.

Ashmole's Berkshire.

<sup>1</sup> Church-wardens' Accounts.

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ioners, by subscription, added twenty pounds more, for the same purpose; but in the year 1657, one Edward Burren, a maltster, and senior church-warden, dying insolvent, the whole of this fund, which had been entrusted to his management, for the benefit of the poor, was lost.

He also gave twenty pounds, to be lent free of interest, to apprentice poor children born in Reading; and no one to have more than five pounds to hold

during his apprenticeship.

Moreover he gave four pounds towards the making of a fair pump, or conduit, in the Market-place, and five pounds more towards enlarging the

guild-hall over the school.

(\*) Mr. George Lane, of Reading, woollen draper, gave by will, in trust to the corporation, for the benefit of the poor, for ever, a certain messuage, in Whitchurch, Oxon: the rent of the premises is not expressed; and, as no return is made of it to parliament, this gift has probably been lost.

1617

1615

Mr. Barnard Harrison, of Reading, brewer, by will dated September 2, 1617, gave four tenements, in the parish of St. Giles, built on land belonging to the corporation, for the use of the poor and impotent persons, also a tenement on the south side of Castle-street, and the reversion of a plot of ground at Henwick, for the benefit of the said poor, for ever; out of which the mayor is to receive five shillings annually for his pains, on condition, that the corporation does not raise the rents of the said tenements for ever; and no man to be put in who has a wife under fifty years of age.

He likewise gave them a rent charge of four shillings, per annum, for the same purpose.

These alms-houses are situated in Southampton-street, and have been lately re-built. They are eight in number, and are now wholly appropriated to women, who have six shillings and three pence quarterly.

Mrs. Wimbleton gave also sixty pounds to the same charity, which produces three pounds, per annum, in the 3 per cent. consols.

Mr. Shirley left forty shillings, per annum, to be divided on May-day among the same alms-people. These three charities are vested in the corporation.

From the surplus arising from these sums, two hundred and twelve pounds seventeen shillings and three pence has been purchased in the South Sea annuities, producing six pounds seven shillings and three pence per annum.

1619

Mr. Anthony Thorne alias Legg, of Mortimer, by will dated July 8, 1619 gave fifty pounds to the corporation, in trust, for the relief of eight poor people, of this town; and Mrs. Mary Worsely gave forty pounds more for the benefit of sixty poor widows of the same place. These sums have been placed

in the public funds, in the name of the corporation, and produce ten pounds per annum.

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(\*) Mr. Peter Wyboe, of London, merchant, gave by will twenty pounds 'to the poor of this town, to be disposed of at the discretion of the corporation.\*

(\*) Mr. Gabriel Barber, gentleman, agent for the council and company of Virginia, gave to the corporation forty pounds, to be lent to six poor tradesmen, at the rate of six pounds thirteen shillings and four pence each, for five years, gratis, and so on from time to time for ever, on condition that they do not keep an inn or tavern, or reside out of the borough.

This gift, in the diary, is called "the lottery money." One having been drawn this year for the benefit of the new settlers in Virginia, and might be given by their agent for the privilege of disposing of the tickets within the borough.

Mr. Robert Reeves, clothier, gave twelve penny loaves, to be distributed every Sunday among the poor of St. Mary's parish, by the church-wardens, whom he invested for the purpose with tenements on the south side of Castle-street, late in the tenure of Mr. Francis Lockey and Mr. William Cockell.

Mr. John Mills, by will, gave six pounds, per annum, to be paid to six householders of St. Mary's parish who do not receive alms of the parish, out of houses in Castle-street, vested in the church-wardens.

Mrs. Elizabeth Elwes, of London, by will dated March 4, 1621, gave to the church-wardens of the parish of St. Lawrence, the sum of one hundred pounds, in trust, to purchase lands; the produce whereof to be distributed annually towards the relief of the poor of the parish for ever. This, with other legacies, was laid out in the purchase of tenements in Reading.

(\*) Mr. Richard Ironside, citizen of London, leather seller, by will dated in April, 1621, gave to the corporation, in trust, twenty pounds, to purchase lands, the produce whereof to be distributed annually among the poor for ever.

\* Probably this twenty pounds was added to the foregoing, for the purchase of annuities, otherwise we cannot conceive, how they should have produced ten pounds interest.

† In the year 1612, king James, in especial favor for the present plantation of English colonies in Virginia, granted a lottery to be drawn at the west end of St. Paul's, whereof one Thomas Sharplys, a taylor, of London, had the chief prize, which was four thousand crowns in fair plate.—

Baker's Chronicles.

Perhaps Mr. Barber had been another of the fortunate holders of a ticket, which occasioned this to be called lottery money.

"When this lottery was censured in parliament, it was said to have supplied the food that nourished Virginia."—Monthly Review.

1620

1621

He also gave one hundred pounds, to be lent gratis, for four years, among four tradesmen, who were to find security for the re-payment of the principal at the expiration of the said term; after which it was to be lent to four others, and so on, every four years, for ever.

1623

(\*) The rev. William Swadden, D. D. and archdeacon of Worcester, gave by will four pounds, out of several estates, to be distributed among the poor of Reading, at the discretion of the corporation.

Mr. John Newman, gave four-pence each, to eighty poor people of the parish of St. Lawrence, to be paid them every Mid-lent Sunday, by the churchwardens and overseers, in whom he vested property for the purpose.

Mr. Richard Aldworth, by will dated the 14th of April 1623, added three pounds to the gift of his father-in-law, Mr. Thomas Deane, (1606) to be distributed in the same manner, and vested in the church-wardens of St. Giles.

1624

Mr. John Kendrick of London, clothier, by will dated December 29, 1624, gave to the corporation, in trust, the sum of seven thousand five hundred pounds, to be disposed of for the benefit of the clothing manufactories in this town.\*

He also gave one hundred pounds, to be bestowed by the corporation on poor maids of this town, on the day of their marriage, at the rate of forty shillings each; but no one to receive it who had not served either master or mistress, or dame, faithfully for seven successive years.

He also gave to the church-wardens of St. Mary's parish, the sum of fifty pounds towards finishing the pinnacles on the tower of the church.

He also gave to the corporation, the sum of five hundred pounds, in trust, to be by them lent gratis, from three years to three years, for ever, to ten honest industrious poor clothiers of the town, after the rate of fifty pounds each; they giving security for the re-payment of the same at the expiration of the three years; they who employed most workmen to be preferred; and in default of clothiers, to be lent in the same manner to other tradesmen, free of interest.

He gave moreover to the corporation, in trust, the further sum of two hundred and fifty pounds, to purchase land and hereditaments, to the annual value of ten pounds, to maintain divine service to be said in the parish church of St. Mary, by the vicar or his curate, every morning of the week, at six of the clock, for ever.†

† See Appendix C.

<sup>\*</sup> In the church-wardens' accounts for 1626, is a charge of two shillings and sixpence, for carving Mr. John Kendrick's arms over the south arch of the tower; but there is no appearance of the arms at present.

The following lines are inscribed round the frame of Mr. Kendrick's picture, in the council-chamber:

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At the top.

Congeries amplum complebat copia cornu, At cum quinque suos decies numeraverat annos, Et sine conjugio, cœlebs, sine prole, deinque,\* Munificum reputans, studiis moribundus adhæsit.

On the right side.

Languida nativæ reparare repagula villæ, Sic meditans, dedit huic nummorum millia septem, Et plus eo, ut solos operantes pascat egenos: Structura fieri varias, mandavit ad artes.

On the left side.

Natus in hac villa fuit, hine posuere parentes, Musæis deditum, post hæc, intentus ad urbem Londini, sortem res mercatoria fixit. Magna erat in quæstu, longo conamine rerum.

At the bottom.

Atque hæc majori et burgensibus omnia recte Constituenda dedit, nullumque abolenda per ævum.

On the right hand side under his arms.

Pauperibus in vita munificus, In morte. munificentissimus. On the left hand side.

Johannes Kendrick, Civis et

Draper de London. Anno Ætatis
suæ 50. Obiit 30 die Decembris,
Anno Domini 1624.

Mr. Griffin Jenkins, of Reading, hair merchant, by will dated March 26, 1624, gave five tenements situated in Johnson's-yard, in Minster-street, in trust, to the corporation, to place in them five poor old men of the parishes of St. Lawrence and St. Mary, to reside therein, rent free:

(\*) Mr. Richard Shaile, broad weaver, by will dated March 22, 1625, gave to the church-wardens and overseers of the parish of St. Giles, the sum of ten pounds, to provide, with the interest thereof, yearly, three shirts and three shifts, worth half a crown each, for six poor aged men and women of that parish; to be distributed by them every Good Friday; which was done till 1688, when the money was lost, by one Francis Millard, a taylor, dying insolvent, to whom the ten pounds had been lent.

1625

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1629

(\*) William Martin, of London, esq. by will dated the 7th of April, 1629, gave forty shillings per annum, to the poor of this town, for ever, arising from lands and tenements near Reading. Vested in the corporation.

(\*) Mr. Richard Winch, of Reading, clothier, by will dated November 13, 1629, gave forty pounds to the corporation, in trust, to be lent to four young clothiers, from seven years to seven years, for ever, free of interest, on their finding security.

1630

Mr. Richard Johnson, of Reading, mercer, gave by will dated March 28, 1630, the sum of one hundred pounds, to the corporation, in trust, to purchase land; also several freehold tenements in Reading, on condition that, on the feast day of St. Thomas, every year, they shall pay, to the church-wardens of St. Lawrence's parish, the proceeds thereof, who, on the day of St. John, the evangelist, shall pay, to the vicar of the said parish, ten shillings, for a sermon, and give to the poor twenty dozen of bread, and twenty shillings in money; and, to the clerk and sexton, twelve pence each, and the residue to go to the repairs of the church.\*

He gave also one hundred pounds to the corporation, in trust, to be by them lent to four tradesmen of the town, free of interest, they giving security for ten years, and so on every tenth year. Twenty pounds to apprentice orphans, at five pounds each, and ten pounds more to build a conduit in the Market-place, and six pounds, to buy a silver bowl, to remain from mayor to mayor, for ever.

He also gave to St. Lawrence's parish, a rent charge of four pounds. Vested in the corporation.

Mr. William Brackstone, of Reading, tanner, by will dated the 21st of December 1630, gave sixty pounds, in trust, to the corporation, to purchase a rent charge of four pounds a year, to be distributed on Good Friday annually, among one hundred and eighty poor women, and twenty poor men; that is to say, four pence each to the women, and twelve pence each to the men: one hundred and twenty of the women to be those appointed to have the groats given by Mr. John Blagrave, and the other sixty to be chosen out of St. Giles's parish, by the church-wardens and overseers, and the twenty poor men to be nominated by the mayor; seven from St. Mary's parish, seven from St. Lawrence's, and six from St. Giles's.

(\*) Randulph Warcupp, of English, Oxon, esq by will, gave to the corporation a sum of money with which they purchased a tenement in the Old-ward, of the yearly rent of forty shillings, for the use of the most poor and needy.

<sup>\*</sup>Only forty shillings of this gift is accounted for in the return made to the house of commons.

(\*) Mr. William Taylor, alias Plonk, gave to the poor of this town twenty shillings, per annum, to be paid to the church-wardens of the three parishes, on St. Thomas's-day, out of the lease of a house in the parish of St. Giles, of which about sixty years were unexpired.

Снар. XX.

(\*) Mr. Henry Morley, of Reading, yeoman, gave to the church-wardens and overseers of the poor of St. Lawrence's parish, five pounds, to add to their stock for the purchase of fuel for the poor.\*

1634

(\*) Mr. Nicholas Gunter, of Reading, by will dated March 9, 1634, gave, in trust to the corporation, one yearly rent charge of four pounds, out of lands and tenements in the parish of St. Giles; out of which they were to pay forty shillings, per annum, to the surveyors of the highways of the parish of St. Lawrence, for the repairing of "Caversham way which goeth from the Vasterns to the east end of Frogmarsh-mead," and twenty shillings to the surveyors of St. Giles's parish, for the "repairing of Mill-lane," and ten shillings for the relief of the poor women in Bernard Harrison's alms-houses, and the remaining ten shillings, to the relief of the poor women in the alms-house on the north side of St. Mary's church gate, in the Butts.

Mr. William Kendrick, of Reading, clothier, by will dated August 30, 1634, gave five tenements, on the west side of Sieviers'-street, for alms-houses, for two men of St. Lawrence's parish, two of St. Giles's, and one woman of St. Mary's, to be elected by the corporation. He also endowed them with a rent charge of twenty pounds a year, on lands at Hartley, and fifty pounds to purchase land to keep the alms-houses in repair; also the rent of a house and barn adjoining the alms-houses. Each poor man to have one shilling and sixpence weekly for his support, and the woman one shilling per quarter for washing for the men. With the remainder of the money, they were to pay forty shillings; a year to the church-wardens of St. Mary's parish, for the lights used at the morning prayers, ten shillings to the vicar for his vault in the chancel, and ten shillings to the corporation, to be spent by them at their meeting to settle the accounts of this charity, and to provide a gown for each of the alms-people every third year; and should any surplus remain, it was to be distributed to the poor of Reading.

\* This was probably lost in 1657: see folio 402.

+ It should seem, by this legacy, that Mill-lane was not at that time considered private property, otherwise the money would not have been left to the repair of it.

‡ In the return to the house of commons, only 191. 4s. is mentioned.

§ Early prayers have long been disused at St. Mary's: but how the 40 shillings, for the lights, have been since employed, we have not heard.

1635

Sir Thomas Vatchel, knt. by indenture, dated January 6, 1635, gave to the corporation, one brick tenement on the south side of Castle-street, between the inn called the Castle, on the west, and the lane leading to the meadows called Pinckney, on the east; also the yearly rent of forty pounds, per annum, on arable, meadow, and pasture lands, called Great and Little Garston, in the parish of Shinfield, to be paid quarterly. The said house to be an alms house for six aged and impotent men, without wives, to be placed therein, during his life by sir Thomas himself, and afterwards by the corporation, and the proprietor of the Coley estate. Four to be out of St. Mary's parish, one out of St. Lawrence's, and one out of St. Giles's; each to have two shillings per week, to be paid them every Saturday; and whenever the surptus would admit of it, to have a gown each, and two loads of wood annually.

Mr. Roger Knight, of Reading, gentleman, gave by will a rent charge of three pounds, per annum, on two tenements in Cross-street, to the church-wardens of St. Lawrence's parish, in trust, to pay yearly, on new year's day, twenty-four shillings to forty-eight poor people of that parish equally. Twenty four shillings towards the reparation of the church, bells, &c. ten shillings to the preacher (if there be a sermon on that day) and the remaining two shillings to the clerk and sexton.

1636

Mr. John Ayre, alias Eyres, of Shinfield, yeoman, gave, by indenture, to the corporation, a rent charge of five pounds, per annum, on lands at Shinfield, in trust for two poor young men of the parish of St. Lawrence, who have served their apprenticeships, forty shillings each to begin trade with: and, one shilling each to twenty poor laboring men; seven to be out of the parish of St. Lawrence, seven out of the parish of St. Giles, and six out of St. Mary's parish; to be selected by the corporation.

1637

Mr. William Ironmonger, of Reading, by will dated May 4, 1637, gave forty shillings, per annum, out of a tenement in Minster-street, towards providing ten waistcoats for four poor people of St. Mary's parish, three of St. Lawrence's, and three of St. Giles's, to be distributed on All Saints-day in every year. Vested in the corporation.

1638

Mr. William Elkins gave, by will, ten shillings, per annum, to three of the poorest aged men, at easter, and ten shillings, per annum, to three of the poorest aged widows at whitsuntide; all to be of St. Mary's parish, and employed in the cloathing trade. This gift was a rent charge upon Chasey-farm, in Mapledurham, Oxon, and has been disputed by the present proprietor.

Mr. Reginald Butler, gave, by will, a rent charge of twenty shillings, per annum, on an estate called Field-farm, in the parish of Burghfield, now in the possession of the earl of Shrewsbury, to be distributed every Good-

Friday among the poor of St. Mary's parish, by the churchwardens, in whom it is vested.

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Mr. John Bagley gave, by will, to the poor of St. Lawrence's parish, a rent charge of ten shillings, per annum; vested in the church-wardens and overseers.

1640

Archbishop Laud, by deed, dated March 26, 1640, gave to the mayor and burgesses of Reading, a rent charge of two hundred pounds, per annum, on a farm at Bray, in trust, among other things to apprentice ten poor boys of the three parishes in Reading; one from Wokingham, and one from Bray, for two succeeding years; and, every third year, one hundred and twenty pounds to be divided among five servant maids, natives of the town, who had served three years in one place, and one from Wokingham. The donor's relatives to be preferred.

Dr. Heylin, in his life of archbishop Laud, says, "he left two hundred pounds, per annum, to the corporation, to be disposed of in the following manner: One hundred and twenty pounds for apprenticing boys, and setting up young beginners; fifty pounds, per annum, for the augmentation of the income of the vicar of St. Lawrence's parish, (the perpetual parsonage of which he purchased, and presented to St. John's college, Oxford) on condition of his residing at the living; twenty pounds to be allotted yearly, to increase the stipend of the schoolmaster; eight pounds for the entertainment of the president and fellows of St. John's college, his visiters, to see all things carried fairly; and the remaining two pounds, to be given, as a yearly fee, to the town-clerk, for registering the names of those, who should from time to time enjoy the benefit of his charity."\* The estate consists of three hundred and eighteen acres of arable and meadow lands, with the farm house and offices.

From the following passage in doctor Lloyd's letter to doctor Bailie, president of St. John's college, Oxford, dated May 17, 1641, it appears that the tenant's rent was not to be increased, but he was to pay a fine of two hundred pounds every eighth year for a renewal of the lease, but it does not appear, that the fine was appropriated by the donor to any specific purpose:

"The archbishop (Laud) hath appointed one year's rent for the renewing of the tenant's estate, after eight years expired; which, every eighth year, will return two hundred pounds. I conceive his grace may, without prejudice to his gift, assign the first time of two hundred pounds towards building this house (the parsonage) which is extream old and low-built.

<sup>\*</sup> According to the original intention of the donor, the rent charge of two hundred pounds per annum was not to have been raised on the tenant; but the family who then possessed the farm being extinct, it is now let for upwards of six hundred pounds, and the charities increased in proportion.

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"Among divers opinions of this gift, one is, that they will soon want boys to bind apprentices in the town. I am sure the annual number of ten will sweep them sufficiently. The general grievance and want of this town is, that they have fair and stately broad streets, if they had means to pitch the m Now if you think good to move my lord's grace, that the fines after the first may be expended every eighth year upon pitching the streets with stone, and the bridges, and so successively to repair these, and the near highways, the inhabitants, I am sure, will be more sensible, and retain a sweeter savour of his grace's magnificence from thence than from all the other liberality."

On the receipt of this charitable donation, the corporation sent the following letter of thanks to the archbishop, supposed to have been written by sir

Thomas Mainwaring, at that time the recorder:

" Most reverend lord,

"We have received from your grace, so great a gift for measure, and so judicious an one for manner, that nothing could more suit with the ample charity of so pious an heart, or more comport with the occasions and necessities of this your native place, now made joyful by this large addition, which supplies our present, and prevents our future poverty. For which so munificent a donation, we can return nothing but thanks to your grace that gave it, our praises to almighty God for raising us up so great and good a friend, and our prayers to the same God, to continue so father-like a patron to us, so strong a pillar to our church, and so able a prop to the common-wealth.

"Wherein, should we or our successors fail in the faithful distribution of what is so wisely and worthily directed by your grace, the very stones of St. Lawrence's church, the scholars yet unborn, and the poor of both sexes, might justly rise in judgment against us. But gratitude equal to so ample a benefit being not to be repaid in words, we humbly entreat your grace, (as physicians judge the dispositions of the heart by the beating of the pulse,) by this small manifestation, to conceive the ardent desires and affections of our hearts and souls, ever to appear

"Your grace's most dutiful and grateful servants."

1646

Richard Aldworth, esq. by will dated December the 21st, 1646, gave four thousand pounds, to purchase a convenient spot for a school, in which twenty poor boys of Reading were to be clothed, boarded, and educated, and two of them every year to be apprenticed out, at the age of sixteen years. Vested in the corporation: who, from the same legacy, were to bestow twenty gowns annually to so many aged men and women of this town, and to give to each of them a loaf every Sunday. Of this sum of four thousand pounds,



RICHARD ALDWORTH.



two thousand pounds was laid out in the purchase of an estate at Sherfield, in 1657, and one thousand nine hundred and ninety pounds in 1659, probably for another portion of the same estate, it consisting originally of three or four farms. They were surveyed in 1723, and found to contain three hundred and sixty acres one rood and thirty eight poles.

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Mr. Richard Jayes, of Reading, left by will four houses in Hosiers'-lane, for four poor widows, who must be fifty years of age at the least; to be elected by the church-wardens and overseers of St. Mary's parish, and endowed them with one shilling and three pence each, per week, arising from the rent of two meadows called Middlehams, in the parish of Sulhamstead, Berks, which in 1730 were let for twenty-one pounds, per unnum. Part of one of these meadows having been cut off when the canal between Reading and Newbury was made, the church-wardens of Woolhampton, who are joint trustees with those of Reading, refusing to agree with the terms proposed by the commissioners, no rent, we believe, has been received for that part for several years.

1647

Mr. John Webb, of Reading, gent. by will dated November the 20th, 1653, gave to the corporation a rent-charge of four-pounds, per annum, on land at Shinfield, in trust, for the maintenance of a weekly lecture at St. Lawrence's church, for ever, and ten pounds towards purchasing a convenient dwelling-house for the master of the free school; also twelve pence per week, to each of the four poor widows in the alms-houses on the north side of St. Mary's church-yard-gate, payable out of a tenement on the south side of Broad-street.

1653

Mr. Thomas Ward, of Reading, cloth-worker, gave by will a rent-charge on a messuage and land at Swallowfield, of ten shillings per annum, for ever, to the church-wardens and overseers of the parish of St. Giles, in trust, to be distributed in equal proportions among four poor persons of that parish annually.

1661

Sir Thomas Rich, by will dated May 16, 1666, gave to the corporation the sum of one thousand pounds, in trust, to purchase land to the amount of fifty four pounds per annum, for the maintenance of six poor boys of this town, and three of the village of Sonning (the place of his residence) in the blue-coat school, founded by Mr. Aldworth.\*

1666

Mr. William Jones, of Whitley, yeoman, by will dated February 27, 1669, gave to the corporation a rent-charge of five pounds per annum, in lands and tenements in Whitley, in trust, to be given annually on Good Friday to five poor butchers of this town, in equal proportions.

<sup>\*</sup> A copy of the will may be seen in the register of Sonning parish.

Curr.

Mr. J. Chamberlayne gave a rent charge of one pound per annum, on an estate at Stratton, Wilts, to be given to the poor of St. Mary's parish, on Ash Wednesday.

1671

(\*) Mr. Francis Mitchell, of London, by will, dated July 1st, 1671, gave one hundred pounds to the corporation, in trust, to purchase a house for the master of the free school to live in rent-free, on condition he does not take more than two shillings and six-pence, per quarter, for teaching any child born in Reading; but if he refuse these terms, then the money to be laid out in apprenticing poor boys of the town. As the master's house was not purchased till more than a century after this donation, it is probable the money was appropriated to the apprenticing poor boys.

1673

Mr. Stephen Atwater, of Reading, clothier, gave twenty shillings, per annum, rent charge, on a freehold estate in Whitley, to the church-wardens of St. Giles's parish, in trust, to be divided among four poor aged men, employed in the clothing trade, on the feast of St. Stephen, the martyr.

Mr. Samuel Jemmatt gave twenty shillings a year, out of an estate at Shinfield, to the church-wardens of St. Giles's parish, in trust; to be distributed on the first day of February every year, among four poor house-keepers belonging to that parish, equally.

1681

(\*) Mr. John Bacon, of Reading, woollen draper, by will, dated September the 11th, 16S1, gave to the corporation, in trust, the sum of one hundred pounds, to be lent out at interest, and the produce thereof to be laid out at their discretion, at their quarterly meetings.

He also gave to the church-wardens of St. Mary's parish, certain tenements in Hosiers'-lane, in trust; with the produce thereof, to distribute on St. Thomas's-day, annually, six shirts to six poor men of that parish. These houses produce forty shillings per annum.

1696

Mr. John Hall, of Reading, apothecary, by will dated June 30th, 1696, gave a rent charge on lands and tenements at Caversham, Oxon, of five shillings per week, for five poor alms people, and ten shillings per annum, for fuel, during the life of his wife; and, at her decease, he gave to the corporation, in trust, a rent charge of twenty-five pounds, per annum, on messuages and lands at Caversham, and also seven tenements on the east side of Chainlane, and all his messuages and lands at Englefield, also his messuages and lands at Sylchester, together with a tenement in the Market-place, Reading, called the Elephant, and the remainder of the lease of another tenement called the Anchor, to dispose of the two last, and with the amount of the sales thereof, to take down the two lowermost of the seven houses in Chain-lane, and on the same site, to build one tenement for a school-master, to maintain and instruct three poor

boys, gratis, in reading, writing, and accounts, one to be out of each parish; for which he was to be allowed eighteen pounds per annum, to be paid quarterly out of the above mentioned estates; and twenty shillings, per annum, to provide them with shoes and stockings, and every second year he was to have a new cloth cloak of forty shillings value; and each boy to have six pounds, on leaving the school, as an apprentice fee.

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The five remaining tenements, to be for the benefit of five poor single alms-people: one out of St. Lawrence's parish, two of St. Mary's, and two of St. Giles's; to be allowed eighteen pence per week each, and twelve shillings per annum for fuel, and ten shillings for clothing. The alms-houses to have the following inscription:

#### Ex dono Johannis Hall Pharmacopei.

To the town-clerk he left twenty shillings per annum, for his care in keeping the accounts, of which the three vicars, with the corporate body, were appointed auditors; and, if any surplus remained at the end of the year, it was to be applied towards the increase of the charity, which at that time produced fifty-five pounds fifteen shillings, per annum.

The fund appropriated by the will for the support of the school, being lately found inadequate to the maintenance of the master and boys, the latter have been added to the blue-coat school, and the house converted into a dispensary: this is the more to be regretted, as the corporation is said to have since discovered, that a Mrs. Norwood, who appears to have deceased about the year 1780, left by will to the corporation, the reversion of three thousand pounds stock, for the increase of Mr. Hall's school, in Reading, after the decease of a Mrs. Whitehorn; it is therefore probable that this legacy will soon, if it has not already, come into the possession of the corporation, when the interest in whatever stock it may be, would have enabled them to continue the school on its old foundation, and to have doubled the number of the boys.

Mr. Thomas Harrison, by will, gave to the church-wardens and overseers of St. Giles's parish, a rent charge of twenty shillings per annum, on an estate in that parish, for the benefit of the eight poor women in Mr. Harrison's alms-houses.

Mr. William Malthus, by will dated November the 16th, 1700, gave to the corporation a rent charge of ninety-one pounds per annum, in trust, for the purpose of maintaining eleven boys of this town, in the blue-coat school.\*

1696

<sup>\*</sup> Mr. Malthus also endowed a school at Blewbury, for thirty boys and thirty girls, with lands at Noke, in Oxfordshire.

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Mr. John Pottinger gave, by will, a rent charge of fifteen pounds per annum, on an estate at North-street in the parish of Tilehurst, for the maintenance of two boys in the above school, to be taken alternately out of each of the three parishes.

1712

(\*) Mr. Thomas Hussey, by a deed dated August 31, 1712, conveyed a piece of ground in Woodley, in the liberty of Sonning, Berks, to a certain trustee therein named, for the sole use and benefit of the poor of St. Mary's parish: Value and application unknown.

Mrs. Mary Kenrick, by will dated December the 15th, 1712, gave all her estates, situated in the counties of Berks, Oxon, and Wilts, in trust to four persons named in the will, to dispose of the same, and from a part of the money arising therefrom, to purchase an estate of the value of eight pounds per annum, to be given by the trustees to poor people of the three parishes, who do not receive alms, in the following proportion: three pounds to St. Mary's parish, three to St. Giles's, and two to St. Lawrence's. An estate was accordingly purchased at Lawrence Waltham, consisting of a cottage, barn, offices, garden and orchard, together with about nine acres of land. With the surplus money arising from the rents of this estate, above the eight pounds per annum, given among the poor, the trustees have purchased one hundred pounds South Sea annuities. The present trustees are Messrs. Maul, Deane, Sowdon, and Deane.

1717

Mr. John West, and Mrs. Frances West, his wife, by indenture dated January 25th, 1717, conveyed to the governors of Christ's-hospital in London, houses and lands there, to the value of one hundred and sixty-three pounds per annum, in trust, to pay the same to poor ancient persons, at the rate of five pounds each, per annum, for life: three of the said persons always to be inhabitants of St. Mary's parish in Reading, and to be elected by the vestry; which election must be certified by a written voucher, signed by the major part of them.

1718

And, by another indenture, dated May 24th, 1718, they conveyed to the cloth-workers' company, houses and lands at that time let for fifty-four pounds nineteen shillings and four pence per annum, in trust, to pay the rents and profits thereof to poor blind people of either sex, at the rate of five pounds each, per annum. Those of Reading, Newbury, or the donor's kindred, to be preferred.

1720

By another indenture dated November the 19th, 1720, they conveyed to the governors of Christ's-hospital, houses and grounds let for two hundred and forty-one pounds eight shillings, in trust, to admit into the hospital, maintain, clothe, educate, and apprentice, as many poor boys and girls as the

fund would admit of, at the rate of ten pounds per annum each, and to pay with each boy, when apprenticed, twenty pounds, and for each girl five pounds; two fifths of such children always to be elected and presented by the three parishes of Reading alternately.

Mr. West gave also to the cloth-workers' company, the sum of twelve hundred pounds, in trust, to purchase therewith lands for the maintenance of six boys in the blue-coat school at Reading: two to be elected out of each parish, by the corporation; and to pay twenty shillings a year to the vicar, for a charity sermon to be preached every St. Thomas's-day, at one of the three churches alternately. Moreover he gave fee farm rents in the county of Northampton, amounting to six pounds five shillings and five pence, per annum, for the purchase of a new suit of clothes, stockings, cap and shoes, for each of the said boys, for ever.

Mrs. Frances West, by indenture dated December 12th, 1723, conveyed to the president and fellows of Sion-college, houses and grounds then let for two hundred and forty pounds, per annum, in trust, to pay twenty personstherein mentioned ten pounds per annum each, for life; and twenty poundsper annum, to be paid towards placing out two orphans, sons of clergymen; and two pounds ten shillings per annum, to the accountant; and afterwards to divide the rents and profits into three parts, and to pay one of the three parts to poor men and women, not less than fifty years of age, at the rate of five pounds per annum, for life: three fourths of these poor people to be natives of Reading.\*

(\*) She also gave, by a codicil annexed to her will, to the vicars and church-wardens of each of the three parishes, in trust, several tenements, and a wharf, held by lease under the corporation, at the yearly rent of six pounds; (which houses and wharf were then let for sixteen pounds per annum,) on condition that the said trustees do, from time to time, during the lease, pay the clear yearly rents thereof, for placing out poor boys apprentices, who had been placed in the blue-coat school on her husband's foundation. This lease has since expired.

(\*) And, by the third codicil to her will, she gave to the ministers and church-wardens of the three parishes, the sum of one hundred pounds, to be by them distributed amongst poor old men and women of this town, at the rate of twenty shillings each.

(\*) In 1726, the rev. Philip Vaughan gave, by will, to the minister and

1726

<sup>\*</sup> The president and fellows of Sion-college have since resigned their interest in this charity to the cloth-workers' company.

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church-wardens of St. Lawrence's parish, and their successors, a rent charge upon an estate at Kate's-grove, of ten pounds, per annum, for reading daily the liturgy of the church of England, in that church, in the afternoon. To be paid quarterly. This benefaction, however, did not take place till Lady-day, 1781.

Mr. Edward Hungerford left, by will, to the corporation, two hundred pounds, in trust, to pay the interest thereof, for ever, to the vicar of St. Lawrence's parish, by half yearly payments, on condition that he or his curate shall daily read in that church, between the hours of two and seven in the after-

noon, the common prayer.

Mr. John Allen, by will dated February 2, 1731, gave the sum of one thousand pounds, for the purchase of freehold lands in Berks; the rents whereof were to be applied, among other purposes, to the apprenticing of one poor boy annually out of each parish in Reading.

An estate was in consequence purchased, in the parish of Tilehurst, in 1736, for the sum of one thousand and fifty pounds, part of the principal and interest arising from the original sum; and, with the remainder, the sum of two hundred and fifty pounds was purchased in the old South Sea annuities. The whole is vested in the three vicars, and other trustees. The estate was let in 1779, for forty-five pounds per annum; nine tenths whereof are employed in apprenticing poor boys, pursuant to the will of the donor, and the remaining tenth is divided yearly between the three vicars, for their care and trouble in the execution of their trust, which amounts annually to about the sum of one pound four shillings each.

The rev. William Boudry and John Richards, esq. gave, by deed, lands to the value of seven pounds fourteen shillings per annum, the produce whereof to be cast lots for by three poor maids (one to be out of each parish) on the first Monday after St. Bartholomew's-day, every year: each girl must have lived five years in one service to be entitled to a chance. This land is situated on the west side of Horn-street, and in the occupation of Messrs. Hewlings, Tomkins, and Fulbrook, gardeners, with a part attached to the row of houses lately built by Mr. Billing, in Southampton-street. The whole is vested in the corporation.

From the commencement of this gift till nearly the present time, the successful candidate was paid eight pounds; but the rents of the land having been lately increased very considerably, she now receives twenty-eight pounds; and the girl who throws the next highest number receives four pounds, and the other three pounds, the gift of Martin Annesley, esq.

Mr. Joseph Neale, by will dated October S, 1765, gave towards the support of a charity school, a sum of money, with which was purchased three

1731

1755

hundred and fourteen pounds, five shillings, and eleven pence, South Sea stock, vested in the rev. Charles Sturges, late vicar of St. Mary's, and two others.

CHAP. XX. 1772

Mrs. Mary Love left, by will, the sum of three hundred pounds, to the corporation, in trust, for the purchase of stock in the public funds, and the interest arising from the same to be distributed quarterly among the poor of Reading, in bread.

Mr. J. Richards transferred five hundred pounds consolidated reduced annuities, to four trustees, namely, H. Deane, esq. J. Richards, esq. hon, and rev. W. B. Cadogan, and the rev. C. Sturges, for the benefit of the girls' charity school, of which he was the principal promoter.

The rev. J. Spicer gave, by will, a leasehold estate in Cross-street, during the remainder of the term, for the benefit of the girls' charity school, amounting to eight pounds six shillings per annum; also the reversion, after the death of Mrs. Spicer, of two hundred pounds, for the same charity.

Mr. John Leggatt, by will dated March 24, 1786, gave to the corporation the sum of two hundred and ten pounds, in trust, with the interest thereof, to apprentice one poor boy out of the three parishes alternately. He likewise gave them fifty pounds towards the support of the boys in the blue-coat school.

Mrs. Clementina Frognall gave, by will, the sum of one hundred pounds stock in the four per cent. bank annuities, in trust, for the benefit of the girls charity school.

Aubery Florey, esq. gave, by will, three hundred pounds for the benefit of the above school.

Mrs. Rachel Veasy, bequeathed, in 1790, the reversion of eight hundred and five pounds, new South Sea stock, vested in the vicar and church-wardens of St. Lawrence's parish, to pay out of the interest arising therefrom annually, to five poor men and five poor widows of that parish not receiving alms, ten guineas, in equal proportions; and three guineas, per annum, to the girls' charity school in this town. This charity has since fallen in.

About the year 1811, Mr. Thomas Cooke, of Pentonville, Middlesex, left, by will, the sum of six thousand three hundred pounds, 3 per cent. consols, for the purpose of encreasing the weekly pay of all the poor in the alms-houses at Reading, in the following proportions; to be paid from the interest of the different sums appropriated to each alms-house:

to 8 men and women. To John a Larder's £1400 3 per cent. William Kendrick's. 875 ditto. to 5 ditto. Sir Thos. Vatchell's, 1050 ditto, to 6 men.

> Carried over 3325

3 н

1786

1789

Снар.

Brought over £3325

John Hall's, 875 3 per cent. to 5 men.

Barnard Harrison's, 1400 ditto, to 8 women.

John Webb's, 700 ditto, to 4 ditto.

£ 6300, interest 1891. or 51. 5s. each, annually.\*

\* Hitherto persons leaving charitable donations to the poor of Reading had been either natives, or inhabitants, or such as by trade or otherwise had been connected with it; but this was not the case in the present instance, Mr. Cooke appearing to have been an entire stranger to the town. All we have been able to learn respecting him, is, that he began the world as an officer of excise, and having been for some years employed in taking the stock, among others, of a widow, who carried on the business of a distiller, he prevailed with her, for prudential reasons, to marry him. Having thus become master of her property, which was very considerable, he continued the business with such success, as to accumulate a property of one hundred and thirty thousand pounds, the whole of which (with the exception of twenty pounds per annum, left to a poor relation) he bequeathed at his death towards the improvement of the incomes of such alms-houses, as, from the great advance in the price of all the necessary articles of life, were become inadequate to support the poor for whose benefit they were originally designed. The better to accomplish this plan, he sent, a few years before his decease, a confidential person to visit different towns, and to send him the necessary information respecting decayed alms-houses, such as—the names of the founders—the sums left for the maintenance of the poor their number in each house—and the state of repair of the several buildings. In all these particulars the returns were so correct with respect to this town, that he seems to have been as well acquainted with the wants of the poor in the alms-houses as if he had been a resident in it; and so nicely has he apportioned the different sums to the number of the inhabitants in each house, that every one will in future, receive just five pounds five shillings annually in addition to his present pay. Whether it was accident or design that brought the visitant to this town, is not known, but the occurrence was a very providential one to the poor inhabitants of our alms-houses, who, prior to this increase of income, were incapable of existing on the small pittance appropriated to their use by the original founders. It appears from some papers left behind him at his death, that, after leaving Reading, his agent proceeded to Newbury, from whence he states the alms-house (we believe Mr. Kimber's) to be in very good repair, and the funds appropriated to the charity sufficient for all the purposes designed. In consequence of this favorable report, this alms-house is not mentioned in the will, his intent being to improve those only which stood in immediate want of an increase of income. He afterwards visited Devizes, &c. in his way to Bath and Bristol, till he had given his employer an account of a sufficient number of alms-houses, whose incomes were inadequate to the maintenance of their tenants, to employ the great sums he had appropriated for the purpose of establishing funds for their future better support. The fulfilment of the various trusts mentioned in the will, being considered by the executers as likely to be attended with difficulties, they applied to the lord chancellor to put in a new trust; and, accordingly his lordship has appointed the corporation of Reading the trust, for the execution of such parts of the will as relate to the borough.

The sums left by Mr. Cooke for charitable purposes, exclusive of legacies, were forty-four thousand five hundred pounds, three per cent. stock, as follow:

Eray Hospital, - 5900 | Fuller's, - 2100 | Wollaston and Pauncefort, 2100

Edward Simeon, esq. bequeathed to the mayor, aldermen, and burgesses, in trust, the sum of one thousand pounds, to be invested in the public funds, the interest thereof to be expended yearly, at or about Christmas, in the purchase of bread tickets, to be distributed among the industrious and deserving poor of the three parishes, entitling them to purchase bread one third below the assize price. And to prevent the bakers receiving injury, the corporation are to appoint different bakers, to whom an equal number of tickets are to be distributed.

Снар. XX. 1813

Also one hundred pounds for the benefit of the blue-coat school.

Also two thousand five hundred pounds in trust, to apply the dividends arising therefrom every other year towards clothing the children of the Sunday schools. Those who have the clothes, to attend divine service in their new clothes, on the day when the mayor is elected.

Also two hundred pounds for the benefit of the girls charity school.

Also one hundred and five pounds to the infants' friends society.

Also two hundred and ten pounds to the Reading dispensary.

Also six hundred pounds, three per cent. consols, bank annuities, to the widows' society.

And one guinea to each member of such friendly societies of which he was a member, who did not divide their stock every year; but no society dividing their stock yearly, to take any benefit by this bequest.

Martin Annesley, esq. has placed in the hands of the corporation the sum of five hundred pounds, 3 per cent. consols, to remain in the national funds, or for the purchase of land, as they may think best, and with the interest or produce thereof to bestow on the four servant maids who may be unsuccessful in easting the dice on Good-friday, and the first Monday after St. Bartholomew's-day, in the proportion of four pounds to the second highest number, and three pounds to the lowest, on each of those days.

To the above list of charitable donations may be added, the fund for the purchase of coals, for the benefit of the poor of the three parishes indiscriminately. This excellent charity, established in the year 1800, owed its rise to the humane exertions of Mr. alderman Austwick, who kindly undertook to superintend the purchase and delivery of the coals to the poor, in the proper

| Bourne's, -         |   | 2100 | Norwich, -       | - |   | 1000 |
|---------------------|---|------|------------------|---|---|------|
| Weavers, -          | • | 2100 | Ditto Infirmary, |   | - | 1000 |
| Spanish,            |   | 1400 | Humane Society,  | - |   | 50   |
| Reynardson's,       | • | 1400 | Tendell's, Exon, |   |   | 1750 |
| Doughty's, Norwich, |   | 6600 | Palmer's, =      | - |   | 700  |
| Cook's,             | - | 1750 | Magdalen, -      |   | • | 2100 |

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seasons. This fund was raised by voluntary subscriptions of five guineas from each subscriber, for which they were entitled to a certain number of tickets, to be distributed among the poor at the discretion of each subscriber, as soon as the frost should set in. The coals were purchased at an early season in the summer, and re-sold, to the holders of tickets, at prime cost. The difference between these and the retail price, in 1803, was as three to four, or six-pence in the bushel; and, notwithstanding this great diminution in the price, the subscribers were enabled to deliver eighteen hundred bushel at the profit of forty-five pounds to the consumers, with the very trifling loss to themselves of four shillings only on each subscription.

Among the schemes which have of late years been adopted, for the benefit of the poorer classes of society, none has been found more congenial to their feelings of independence, when under the necessity of soliciting the aid of their fellow men who have been more favored by fortune, than this method of enabling them to purchase the necessaries of life, at all seasons, in proportion to their means. It is therefore with great satisfaction, we congratulate the town on having set the example of so useful and so beneficent an institution, and hope that its success, in the present instance, may recommend the adoption of a similar plan, whenever the necessaries of life shall have risen above that medium, at which only it is in the power of the industrious laborer to purchase them.

While speaking of the charities which do credit to the donors, we must add, the very generous donations for which the poor of the present day are indebted to the philanthropy of E. Simeon, esq. who has done more for the benefit of the poor than they ever experienced from any former benefactor. In the winter season, since the year 1802, till his death, this gentleman has been in the habit of distributing, among poor families, blankets, and under-garments for the women, besides clothing a number of children of both sexes, in neat dresses befitting their situation in life; and every year, on the election of a new mayor, they, together with the school charity children, were paraded in the market-place, and regaled with a large plumb-cake: this, though it may appear a trifling circumstance in the eyes of some, is a higher gratification to the infant mind than even their new dress, whereby they appear elevated above their equals.

# ADDITIONS.

### History, folio 20.

RICHARD II. held a great council of peers at Reading, where the duke of Gloucester and the lords of his party were brought to court by the duke of Lancaster, and reconciled to the king through his mediation. Walsingham, page 342.

#### Folio 59.

The following are the reasons given by sir Edward Walker in his Historical Discourses, page 11, for his majesty's slighting the fortifications of Reading: "His majesty, that he might draw the greater number out of his garrisons of Oxford and Reading, gave instant orders for completing the city regiment, and raising two regiments of auxiliaries, consisting of gentlemen scholars and their servants resident in the city of Oxford, under the command of the earl of Dover and the lord Lyttleton, lord keeper, and for the raising another regiment of auxiliaries in the garrison of Reading, under the command of colonel Richard Neville, high sheriff of Berks. Those regiments in Oxford were raised and completed to considerable numbers, and have done constant duty ever since, to their great honor and the manifest preservation of this city, but the other regiment at Reading was no sooner raised but it was disbanded, the works about that town slighted, and the garrison drawn out and joined to the rest of the army. To give satisfactory reasons for quitting that place of so great importance may be very difficult, but the army being quartered at Newbury, as the most apt situation in regard to Reading, Wallingford, and Oxford, and whence, if it should be resolved that Reading should be quitted, we might with our army slight the works before the rebels should possess it."

#### Folio 115.

The prince regent being on a visit to R. Boroughs, esq. at Basildon-house, now sir Richard Boroughs, bart. the mayor, aldermen, and burgesses, attended by the members of the borough, and the mayor's chaplain, waited on his royal

highness there, and were introduced by Mr. Boroughs and lord Charles Bentinck into the grand saloon, where his royal highness the prince regent, attended by his royal highness the duke of Clarence, and a large circle of nobility and gentry, received them in the most gracious manner.

The mayor and corporation having advanced to the top of the room, where his royal highness had taken his station, the mayor supporting the mace in his right hand, the town-clerk read the following address, and afterward delivered it to the mayor, (Lancelot Austwick, esq.) who, upon one knee, presented it to his royal highness the prince regent:

"The humble address of the mayor, aldermen, and burgesses of the ancient borough of Reading, in the county of Berks, in common hall assembled.

" May it please your royal highness,

"We, his majesty's most dutiful and loyal subjects, the mayor, aldermen, and burgesses of the ancient borough of Reading, approach your royal highness with our sincere congratulations on your safe arrival in our vicinity.

"We rejoice that the condescension of your royal highness has afforded us this opportunity of renewing the assurances of an unvaried attachment to his majesty's person and government, and to his illustrious family, and in an especial manner to your royal highness, under whose wise and energetic administration, during the lamented indisposition of his majesty, the rank and character of the united kingdom have been supported among foreign nations, and its military glory raised to an eminence of which the history of this country affords few examples.

"Allow us to add our humble hope and confidence, that the exertions of his majesty's faithful people, under the wise and vigorous guidance of your royal highness's councils, may, through the blessing of divine providence, be crowned, at no distant period, with a safe and lasting peace.

"Done under our common seal, this fourteenth day of September, in the fifty-third year of his majesty's reign."

To which his royal highness read the following answer:

" Mr. mayor, aldermen, and burgesses of the borough of Reading,

"I receive with true gratification the renewed expressions of your affectionate welcome to the vicinity of your ancient borough.

"I feel sensibly the renewed expressions of your loyalty and attachment to his majesty and my family, and no one can so deeply deplore as myself the lamented indisposition which has been the occasion of transferring to me the high functions of our beloved and venerable king. "I heartily rejoice with you in the glorious and unrivalled successes with which it has pleased providence to bless our arms, and I look forward with fervent hopes, that, by the continuance of vigorous councils, and by the united exertions of a brave and patriotic people, we may be unmoveably fixed on the proud pre-eminence upon which we stand, and ultimately succeed in obtaining an honorable and lasting peace.

"Accept my best wishes for the welfare and prosperity of your ancient and respectable borough."

#### Population, folio 123.

January 26, 1719, a petition was presented to parliament from the mayor, aldermen, and burgesses, and from the clothiers, drugget makers, &c. of the borough of Reading, in behalf of themselves and seven thousand depending on them. Votes of the commons.

### Miscellaneous, folio 168.

The manors of Reading and Whitley appear to have been united in the time of the abbots, and as such were given, in the second year of king Edward VI. to his uncle, the lord protector, on whose death soon after, they reverted to the crown, and were separated in the following reign, when queen Mary gave the manor of Whitley to sir Francis Englefield:

"Berks, anno -, 3 of May, anno 2 of Edward 6th.

"The manor of Redinge and Whitley, in the countie of Berkshire, pacile of the possessions of the attainted monasterie of Reading, above xl. 6s. 8d. for the fee of the bayliffe of Redinge; 3l. 10. for the collectors fee of roytelege: 3ll. 5. 10. for certain fees granted by letters patents, granted to sir William Penyston, knt. 8l. 10. 8. for the keeper of the park of Whitley: 5l. 6. 8. for the understeward's fee: 6l. and 20d. for the keeper's fee of the gayle in Redinge: 2s. for rente extincte: 15s. for rente discharged, and 3s. for decayes by the year. Some is per an. £102.13s. 9d.

"All which premesses, with their appurtenances, the king's majestie, by the advice of his highnesses counsell is pleased and contented to give and graunt to the saide lord protector's grace, to his heirs and assignes for ever, as parcel of the sum of cccce by the yeare, given by his majesty with the advice aforesaid unto the saide lord protector, in recompense of the right and notable service by him done, through the goodness of Almighty, unto the kings majestie and this realm at his last voyage into Scotland." Harl. MS. 4316, p. 237.

### Military, folio 179.

Exeter being besieged by an insurrection of the people, on account of the change of religion and the enclosure of commons, the lord Gray was despatched to its relief with some German and Italian mercenaries, together with 200 men sent him from Reading. Hayward's Life and Reign of Edward VI. fol. 295.

### Green School, folio 211.

Mr. Brookman gave by will the sum of 200 pounds, in 1811, and Mr. Edward Simcon, the sum of 180 pounds, in 1813, which has since been employed in the purchase of stock for the benefit of this school.

### Representation, folio 239.

March 30, 1715, a petition, from divers inhabitants of Reading paying-scot and lot within the borough, was presented to the house, complaining of an unduc election and return. And, on the 19th of June, 1716, a petition from Felix Calvert, esq. was presented to the house, complaining of an undue election. Votes of the commons.

October 28, 1772, a petition was presented to parliament by Charles Cadogan, esq. and Richard Thompson, esq. complaining of an undue election for the borough. *Ibid*.

### Antiquities, folio 281.

In a letter printed in the gentleman's magazine for 1786, this coffin is represented to have been 8 feet 7 inches long, roofed at the top, the ridge fluted and remarkably thick with lead; the lid ornamented with a few studs in form of diamonds, with an inscription in brass, which was sent to the antiquarian society, but only two initial letters were distinguishable.

# Corporation, folio 353.

We have already noticed how far the prerogatives of the corporate body were subordinate to the abbot and monks: and this remark is further corroborated by the following extract, which shews that the former were not even allowed to have the mace carried before the mayor; it being considered an usurpation on the rights of the abbey:

# " Lre reg. Henrici Sexti directe custodi gildæ de Rading

"Welbeloved we grete you wel, and how be hit that we calle to ovre remembrance how that att our last beinge at the towne of Radynge we licensed you to here only the mase before us, so that yt be not prejudiciall to ovr churche and monasterye of Redyng, yet nevertheless ye use it otherwise

than was or is according to ovr intent. In so much that as we sithence have clerely perceived by shewing of euidence and credible report made unto us of the antique usage and custome had in the same towne that yt is contrarye to the franchise and liberties of ovr saide church and monasterye by our noble ancestors graunted and by us confirmed, you to be called or bere other in name or wth signe otherwise than as keeper of the gilde of Redyng admitted by the abbot of our saide monasterie and not by us for to have any mase or any other signe of office to be born by you or any other man within the said town and franchise of Redyng saving only two tipped staffs to be born by the bayliffe of the abbot of our said monasterie graunted and given to the abbot and convent of the same oure monasterie at the first foundation thereof oute of courte of marchalsie eldest of recorde with all manner of court plees of dette of trespasse and other and all execution of the same to be don by his bayliffe and by non other, as in their charters of graunte and confirmation more evidently yt appeareth. We therefore will and charge you straitly that ye ne use nor bere any mase nor other signe nor do to be borne by none other personne within the said towne and franchise thereof whereby the interesse and right of our said monasterie might in any wise be interupted or hurted which else we wolde nor never entended saving only the two tipped staffs in maner and forme as is above rehersed as ye desire to plese us and will eschew the contrary. Geven under our signet at Eltham the 30 day Juille ---."

Registrum Cartarum Abbatiæ de Rading.

# Castle Street Chapel, folio 130.

A new chapel was erected in Castle-street, in the year of our Lord 1799, and opened under the toleration act, though the worshippers there do not call themselves dissenters: they before attended divine worship at St. Giles's church, but not hearing the same doctrine preached that they had been accustomed to hear, they erected this neat and commodious chapel, where a very large congregation has worshipped ever since.

# Folio 249, line 34.

Forbury Gate. "Upon the left open door of the gate-house is this inscription: Angeli qui custodiant muros ejus. and this coat 3 escallop shells. In the windows of a large upper room adjoining the gate-house, now used as a dining room, are those of queen Elizabeth and of Seymour with its 5 quarterings."

"In this room hang divers old pictures of the family of Knollys. Six Francis Knollys did live here. The father and son chosen burgesses of Reading. The son dying in this town when the Earl of Essex and his rebels were possessed of the town in 1643."

The last quotation is taken from the Topographer for 1789, and was extracted by the editor of that work from notes taken by Richard Symonds, who was in the king's (Charles I.) army during the civil war, and took notes in small pocket books, of remarkable transactions, &c. that took place, during the troubles, eight or ten of which he says are in the Harleian library, two were in Dr. Mead's, and two or three in the Herald's-office. Among the books in the Harleian library, No. 964 and 965 contain Oxford, Worcester, Berks, and Shropshire; for 1644, No. 939, Devon, Dorset, Somerset, Wilts, and Berks.

#### The Abbey Church, fol. 252.

In 1815, some workmen digging in search of gravel in the nave of the abbey church discovered about six feet under the present surface the remains of a stone sarcophagus, resting on two collateral brick walls at a small distance from each other. The sarcophagus had been apparently wilfully destroyed, only the bottom and a small proportion of the sides remaining. The stone is similar to Bath stone, and had been excavated in form of a chest or cistern. The bottom was seven inches thick, and was furnished with three holes about one inch diameter placed longitudinally in the centre, and at equal distances, apparently for the purpose of carrying off the moisture from the corpse. There are two iron rings about four inches diameter on each side, and one on each end; these are much corroded: but one of them still runs in the eye of the iron pin which is square and let into the stone about six inches. These rings, by their position, seem intended for the purpose of receiving bars or ropes for the more easily removing the sarcophagus. The sides and ends appear to have been ornamented with slender pillars in bass relief resting on small pedestals with circular mouldings, from which the shaft rises. There were sixteen of these pillars on each side and several at the ends. The length of the bottom is seven feet three inches, breadth three feet five inches at the head, and two feet nine at the bottom. This stone was found in the centre of the nave of the church, near the skreen which probably divided the nave from the chancel; and from its being ornamented as above described, was probably intended to have been exposed to view; in which case it might have stood on the pavement. No remains were found except a small piece of bone much decayed, nor any memorial of the deceased; therefore no conjecture can be formed for whom it was designed. Like the leaden coffin discovered a few years since, as mentioned in the former part of this work, (fol. 280) this was supposed to have contained the remains of Henry I. but that monarch was interred near the high altar, as was always the case with the founders of religious houses; and if my conjectures are right in tracing the ruins of the church, as shewn in plate XV. the spot where this

fragment was found, was at too great a distance from the altar, being in the centre of the nave, on a line with the cottage shewn in the plan. Besides we are told that the monks erected a magnificent monument to his memory, on which his figure as large as life was placed: this therefore could not have been the same, as it does not contain any characteristic marks of magnificence. For these reasons, I am induced to think that this sarcophagus made no part of the royal sepulchre, but had been the receptacle of the remains of some of the abbots or great personages who were interred in this church, and who probably died abroad, from the circumstance of the rings remaining, intended to assist in the more easy removing it on board ship and conveying it from the coast to the place of its interment. If the interior of this ruin was carefully investigated there can be little doubt but many interesting discoveries might be made, and the real place of the royal sepulchre discovered, or at least the foundation of the walls still remaining under ground might be traced at a small expense, so as to furnish a correct plan of the form and dimensions of this church, which appear very much to resemble, in its ground plan, that of Westminster Abbey, though perhaps on a smaller scale.

#### Folio 269, line 9.

"To the lepar's house at Reading, after every day (sic), there was an allowance among them, thus; that the 'elemosinarius ministrat omni tempore, singulis singulos panes armigerorum et singulos galones cervisiæ mediocris, ita quod duæ partes sint de cervisia militum, tertia de dolio conventus:'\* the almoner was to give to each a loaf of the esquire's (armigerorum) bread, and a gallon of mixed beer, so that it should contain two parts of knight's (militum) beer, and one taken from the cellar of the convent. What sort of bread that called the esquire's was, is uncertain, but it was perhaps coarser than the better sort used by the knights and people of superior rank. The beer called here knights beer might be what was afterwards called double or strong beer; that from the convent, small beer."

### History, folio 282.

According to Eadmerus, fol. 122, queen Matilda died and was interred at Westminster. "His diebus gravi damno Anglia percussa est, in morte reginæ. Defuncta siquidem est apud Westmonasterium, kl. Maii, et in ipso monasterio decenter sepulta."

#### Folio 318.

John and Daniel Blagrave. "About a small mile distant from Reading, westward, stands a pretty small house of brick, with about forty acres of

<sup>\*</sup> Mon. Ang. fol. 420.

meadow and other plowing ground round about it, built by John Blagrave, who has a fair new wrought monument within the south wall of the church of St. Lawrence of Reading, near the pulpit. His nephew and heir Daniel Blagrave did live in the house 'till the kings forces frighted such guilty rebellious spirits away. He was an attorney of Staples Inn. This house stands just between Cowley (Coley) house belonging to Vatchel and sir John Blagraves."

Topographer, fol. 414, for 1789.

The greater part of this building has been since demolished, and the remainder converted into a farm-house. It is now the property of Messrs. Stephens.

#### Folio 332.

St. Giles' Church. "The king has the gift of the vicarage of St. Giles, and he that is vicar is also parson. Most of the parish was the abbot's demesne, viz. The manor of Whitley, a hamlet belonging to this parish, and the park of Whitley was the abbot's park, and the fields lying towards Sonning, eastward, were therefore called the \*\*\*\*\*, and were the abbot's warren, and were for the provision of the abbot's household, and therefore free from tythes." Ibid.

### Corporation, folio 374.

#### MAYORS.

1814. William Andrews, esq.

1815. John Blandy, esq. vice Mr. William Garrard, the senior alderman in rotation, who refused to serve on the ground of excessive deafness.

#### ALDERMEN.

1814. John Blandy, esq.

1815. John Bulley, esq. vice Mr. Richards, resigned. T. Sowdon, esq. vice Mr. William Garrard.

#### BURGESSES.

1814. Mr. Thomas Garrard.

Mr. Henry Simonds.

1815. Mr. Thomas Ward, jun.

# High Stewards, folio 391.

Whitlocke had a salary of one thousand pounds per annum, as commissioner of the treasury; and, on the event of Cromwel's being made king of England, was to have been one of the forty-three members intended to form a house of lords. Harleian Miscell. v. 3, p. 460.

#### Folio 408.

" In the north window of the north aisle of St. Sir Thomas Vatchell. Mary's church in Reading, these arms are lately set up for Vatchell. of 6 B. and Erm, quartering O, a chevr. int. 3 cocks S, impaling Knollys with this motto: Better suffer than revenge. A. D. 1632. Against the wall of this chapel hangs the coat armour helm, mantle and a penon with the crest, and the above motto. Mr. Tanfield Vatchell whom the king (Charles I.) made sheriff of Berks in 1643, and who left his service, and went to rebellion (whose house on the north side the town newly built upon the old priory now pulled down) is heir to the said Sir Thomas Vatchell his uncle. The reason assigned for this family adopting the above motto, is, according to the tradition of the inhabitants of Reading, on account of a dispute which arose between one of the abbots of the town and a proprietor of this estate of the name of Vatchell. It seems the former claimed a right of passage for the carriage of his hay through Mr. Vatchells yard, which he resisted, and after many messages had passed between the two, the abbot sent one of his monks to force a passage through, which so incensed Mr. Vatchell that in a violent passion he slew the monk, and afterwards, on repenting the act, he took the Topographer for 1789, fol. 415. above motto.

# Mrs. Veasey's Charity, fol. 417.

The interest arising from the eight hundred and five pounds SS. annuities is to be divided on St. Thomas's-day, as follows: To five industrious house-keepers and five widows of St. Lawrence's parish not receiving alms, one guinea each. To two servant girls of the borough, who have lived two years in one place to the satisfaction of the master or mistress, two guineas each. To the green girls charity school, three guineas. To the Sunday schools, for the purchase of books, one guinea; and to ten poor persons of that parish male or female, ten shillings and sixpence each.

At the end of the arduous contest which this nation had been engaged in for more than twenty years, by the treaty of peace concluded with France, on the restoration of the ancient dynasty, in 1814, the people not only solemnised the event by every demonstration of joy usual on such occasions, but wishing that every class of the inhabitants who had experienced the pressure of the times past, might partake, in a particular manner, of the joy manifested on the occasion, determined to celebrate the happy event in a manner to be remembered by the latest posterity. For this purpose, the poor of every town and village were regaled, at the expense of the superior classes of the inhabitants, by

voluntary subscriptions. In this characteristic display of benevolence peculiar to this country, the wealthier inhabitants of Reading were not behind-hand with their neighbors. A subscription was set on foot, and a sufficient sum of money collected to entertain all the lower class of inhabitants, with their wives and children, to the number of nearly six thousand individuals, who partook of a sumptuous entertainment, dressed at the houses of the principal inhabitants. On this occasion tables were set out along the streets, decorated with branches of laurel and other insignia of peace. These tables extended from the top of London-street, over High-bridge, Duke-street, Kingstreet, the Market-place, and the greater part of Friar street, forming a continued line of nearly one mile in length. At the end of the Market-place, near St. Lawrence's church, a canopy was erected at the head of one of the tables, under which Martin Annesley, esq. the deputy-mayor, presided; each of the other tables, eighty in number, and forty feet each in length, with some smaller ones, was superintended by 480 of the principal inhabitants, who, as stewards, attended, to carve and supply the wishes of their guests, and who conducted the whole of the entertainment so as to give universal satisfaction to the numerous spectators attracted by curiosity to the spot, as well as to the individuals who partook of this truly civic feast, and whose decorum of behavior cannot be too highly praised. In the evening several rural sports took place in the Forbury, and the festivities concluded without the slightest circumstance taking place to disturb the harmony of the day.

# APPENDIX.

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Copy of the governing Charter of Charles the First.

Appendix A ...

Charles, by the grace of God, king of England, Scotland, France, and Ireland, defender of the faith, &c.

To all to whom these presents shall come, greeting-

authority is derived from the prince, and kings are for that purpose authorized in the sublime scal of majesty, that as fathers of the country they should protect the people committed to them by the king of kings, that with the dew of their benignity they should refresh their faithful subjects, either employed in trading or any other way whatsoever, concerning the good of the commonwealth; and that they should substitute subordinate officers, who for the administration of justice and the conservation of the peace, should be rulers over cities, and other places of their territorics, and over the people inhabiting the same.

And whereas our borough of Radings, alias Reading in our county of Berks, is ancient and populous, chiefly inhabited by burgesses, diligently exercising the making of cloth and merchandizing. And although the burgesses of the same borough, as well by reason of divers charters and letters patents made and granted to them and their predecessors, by divers of our progenitors and antecessors, kings and queens of England, as of prescriptions and customs used within the said borough, from the time whereof the memory of man is not to the contrary, have used and enjoyed divers liberties, franchises, privileges, immunities, and easements. Since the said burgesses have most humbly besought us, that, for the better ordering of things within the said borough, we would vouchsafe of our royal goodness to favor them, and the said borough, by granting them more ample privileges. We favorably beholding the said burgesses and borough, have resolved to adorn and encourage them with the influence of our goodness, not only by confirming their ancient, but also by conferring new privileges upon them; hoping, that the said burgesses, being invested with our authority, and animated with our favor, well, (as it is mete) have a care—that trades be nourished—that our peace be kept within the same borough—that the vicious be corrected with the severe sword of justice—and that condign rewards be given to the virtuous.

Incoperation

Know ye therefore that of our especial grace, and certain knowledge and mere motion, we have ordained and declared, and by these presents, for us, our heirs and successors, we do ordain and declare. that the said borough be, and from henceforth for ever remain, a free borough of itself, terminated by its wonted limits and bounds; and that the men and free burgesses of the borough aforesaid, by whatsoever name or incorporation they are called, known, or incorporated, be and for ever hereafter shall be, a body corporate and politic, in deed and in name, by the name of the mayor, aldermen, and burgesses, of the borough of Reading, in the county of Berks. And by these presents, we do really and fully, for us, our heirs, and successors, make, create, and declare them, a body corporate and politic, in deed and in name, by the name of the mayor, aldermen, and burgesses of the borough of Reading, and that by the same name they may have perpetual succession, and that they and their successors, by the name of mayor, aldermen, and burgesses of the borough of Reading, in the county Power to best of Berks, be, and for ever hereafter shall be, persons able and capable in law, to have, take, purchase, and possess, manors, lands, tenements, rents, liberties, privileges, jurisdictions, franchises, and hereditaments, of whatsoever kind, nature, name, or sort they shall be of, to them or their successors, in fee and perpetuity, or for any terms whatsoever, and also goods and chattels, and whatsoever other Power to dis-thing of whatsoever kind, nature, name or sort; and also to give, grant, assign, and dispose of manors, pose of lands lands, tenements, hereditaments, goods and chattels, and by the name aforesaid, to do and execute all

sess lands.

and singular other things, touching the said borough; and that by the same name of mayor, aldermen. and burgesses of the borough of Reading in the county of Berks, they may plead and be impleaded. answer and be answered unto, defend and be defended, in all and singular actions, pleas, suits, complaints, causes, matters, and demands, real, personal, or mixed, whatsoever, and of whatsoever kind, in whatsoever court, and before whatsoever judges, justices, or other officers, of us, our heirs, or successors, moved or to be moved, in the same manner and form as other our subjects of our kingdom

To have a

power to plead of England, being persons able, or capable in law; or any other body corporate and politic, within our kingdom of England, may or can possess, give, grant, demise, assign, or dispose, plead or be impleaded, answer and be answered unto, defend or be defended, do, or execute.

And that the mayor, aldermen, and burgesses of the borough aforesaid, and their successors, may common seal, for ever have a common seal, to serve for all their causes and business, any way concerning the said borough; and that it shall and may be lawful, for the said mayor, aldermen, and burgesses, and their

successors, from time to time at their pleasure, to break, change, and make new the same seal, as it shall seem expedient to them.

body.

And further, we will, and by these presents, for us, our heirs, and successors, do declare, that for The corporate ever hereafter, there may and shall be within the borough aforesaid, of the free burgesses of that borough, in manner hereafter in these presents mentioned to be elected, viz. one who shall be called mayor, thirteen who shall be called aldermen (whereof we will the mayor to be one) and twelve who shall be called assistants of the same borough, which said assistants shall be from time to time counselling and helping to the mayor and aldermen of the borough aforesaid, in all causes, things, and businesses, touching or any way concerning the said borough, as often as they shall be thereunto required; and for the better effecting of our business in this behalf, we have assigned, named, constituted, and made, and by these presents, for us, our heirs, and successors, we do assign, name, constitute, and make, our well-beloved Richard Burren, the first and present mayor, and our wellbeloved Thomas Turner, gent. Robert Maulthus, gent. Christopher Turner, gent. John Newman, gent. Robert Bent, gent. John Dewell, gent. George Thorne, gent. Anthony Brackston, gent. the aforesaid Richard Burren, gent. above constituted mayor of the borough aforesaid, John Jennings, gent. Robert Dee, gent. William Jacobs, gent, and Thomas Harrison, gent. the first and present aldermen; and our well-beloved Peter Burningham, Thomas Thackham, George Wooldridge, Richard Jeyes, Edward Baker, William Turner the elder, William Brackstone, Edward Hamlin, Christopher

Blower, William Turner the younger, George Thorne the younger, and Thomas Dewell, the first Mayor to be and present assistants of the said borough. Willing, and by these presents ordaining, that the said Richard Burren, before he be admitted to exercise the office of mayor within the said borough, shall take his corporal oath before our well-beloved sir Edward Clerke, knt. and John Harrison, esq. or either of them, to execute the said office of mayor, justly and faithfully, in all things touching that office, and after that oath so taken, he may exercise the same office of mayor of the said borough, until the last Monday in the month of August next ensuing the date of these presents, and until another shall be duly elected, preferred, and sworn in the same place, according to the provision hereafter in these presents declared, if the said Richard Burren shall live so long.

And further, we will, and by these presents, for us, our heirs, and successors, we do grant unto the said mayor, aldermen, and burgesses of the borough of Reading aforesaid, and their successors, that yearly from henceforth for ever, upon the last Monday in August, it shall and may be lawful, as well for the mayor and aldermen of the same borough, for the time being, or the greater part of them, to name three of themselves, whomsoever they please, as to the mayor, the rest of the aldermen and the assistants of the same borough, for the time being, or the greater number of them, to elect one of these three aldermen, so named to be mayor for the same borough, and that, he that shall be so elected mayor of the borough aforesaid, before he be admitted to exercise the office of mayor of the same borough, viz. upon Monday next after the feast of St. Michael the archangel next following after such election, shall take his corporal oath, before the last mayor, predecessor of the mayor so elected, the rest of the aldermen, and the assistants of the said borough, for the time being, or so many of them as will be present to execute the office of mayor of the borough justly and faithfully, in all things touching that office, and after that oath so taken, may exercise the office of mayor of the said borough, until the last Monday in the month of August, then next following, and until another shall be duly elected, preferred, and sworn into the same office, and so from year to year, every year, for ever; as often as any one elected to be mayor shall die, or refuse to bear the office of mayor of the same borough, before he hath taken such oath, we will, and by these presents do ordain, that the

nomination and election be made anew, and that he that is newly elected (his oath being first taken as

aforesaid) may execute the office of mayor of the borough in form aforesaid.

When to choose the mayor.

And if it shall happen, that the said mayor before constituted, or any other mayor of the afore- On the death said borough hereafter to be chosen, by virtue of these presents, for the time being, shall die after his of the mayor, oath so taken, and before another is duly named and elected mayor, we will, and by these presents, for to proceed to a us, our heirs, and successors, do grant unto the said mayor, aldermen, and burgesses of the borough new election. aforesaid, and their successors, that after the death of such mayor (to wit) within a convenient and fit time, and not procrastinated by unnecessary delay, it may and shall be lawful, as well for the rest of the aldermen of the same borough, for the time being, surviving the said mayor, to name three of themselves whomsoever they please, in form aforesaid, as for the aldermen not named, and the assistants of the borough, for the time being, or the greater part of them, to elect and prefer one of the three aldermen so named, to be mayor of the said borough, in the place and office of the mayor so dead; which said alderman so elected and preferred, to be mayor of the said borough, his oath being taken before the rest of the aldermen, and the same assistants of the same borough, or so many of them as shall be present in form aforesaid, may have and exercise the office of mayor of that borough, until another be duly elected, preferred, and sworn in the same office, in form aforesaid; and in the mean time, and in every other vacancy of the mayoralty of the borough aforesaid, the senior alderman for the time being shall officiate in the mayoralty, and so from time to time, as often as the case shall happen, for ever.

We will further, and by these presents do declare, that every one of the said aldermen before constituted by these presents, before he be admitted to exercise the office of one of the aldermen of the borough aforesaid, shall take his corporal oath, before the mayor afore constituted, sir Edward

Albermen to

Clerke and John Harrison, or either of them, to exercise the office of one of the aldermen of the same borough, justly and faithfully, in all things touching that office, and after that oath so taken, may exercise the office of one of the aldermen of the borough during his natural life, unless in the interim, in the manner and for the cause hereafter mentioned, he shall be removed from that office, and if it shall happen, that any of the aldermen of the borough, before constituted, by these presents, or by virtue hereof hereafter to be chosen, shall die, or be removed from his office, we will, and by these presents, for us, our heirs, and successors, do grant unto the said mayor, aldermen, and burgesses, and their successors, that after the death or removal of such aldermen (to wit) at a fit and convenient time, and not procrastinated by unnecessary delays, it shall and may be lawful for the mayor and the rest of the aldermen aforesaid, for the time being, or the greater number of them, to elect and prefer one of the assistants of the borough for the time being, to be one of the aldermen of that borough in the place of such aldermen so dead or removed, to supply the said number of aldermen aforesaid, and that the assistant who shall be elected one of the aldermen of the borough aforesaid, before he be admitted to exercise the office of one of the aldermen of the borough, shall take his corporal oath before the mayor and the rest of the aldermen of the same borough for the time being, or so many of them as shall be present, to execute the office of one of the aldermen of the borough, justly and faithfully, in all things touching that office, and after that oath so taken, may exercise and use the office of one of the aldermen of the said borough, during his natural life, unless in the interim, in the form, and for the cause, hereafter declared, he shall be removed from that office, and so from time to time, as often as the case shall so happen, for ever. We will further, and by these presents do ordain, that every of the aforesaid assistants before

Election of allern n.

Assistants to constituted by these presents, before he be admitted to exercise the office of one of the assistants of the

borough aforesaid, shall take his corporal oath, before the mayor so constituted as aforesaid, sir Edward Clerke and John Harrison, or any one of them, to execute the office of one of the assistants of the same borough well and faithfully in all things touching that office, and after that oath so taken, may exercise the office of one of the assistants of the same borough, during his natural life, unless in the interim he shall be elected or preferred to be one of the aldermen of that borough, or in the manner, or for the cause hereafter mentioned, he shall be removed from that office; and if it shall happen, any of the assistants of the borough, before constituted by these presents, or by virtue hereof hereafter to be chosen, do die or be elected and preferred to be one of the aldermen of the borough, or be removed from his office, we will, and by these presents, for us, our heirs and successors, do grant unto the said mayor, aldermen, and burgesses, and their successors, that after the death, preferring, or removing of such assistant, viz. at a fit and convenient time, and not procrastinated by unnecessary delays, it may and shall be lawful to and for the mayor and aldermen of the same borough for the time being, Election of an or the greater number of them, to elect and prefer one of the burgesses of the said borough to be one of the assistants of the same borough, in the place and office of such assistant so dead, preferred, or removed, to supply the said number of assistants of that borough, which said burgess so elected to be one of the assistants as aforesaid, before he be admitted to exercise the office of one of the assistants of the borough, shall take his corporal oath before the mayor and aldermen of the same borough for the time being, or so many of them as will be present, to execute the office of one of the assistants of the borough justly and faithfully in all things touching the same office, and after that oath so taken, may likewise have and exercise the office of one of the assistants of the said borough during his natural life, unless in the interim he shall be elected and preferred to be one of the aldermen of the same borough, or in manner, or for the cause hereafter mentioned, he shall be removed from the same office, and so from time to time, as often as the case shall so happen, for ever.

Sleward.

assistant.

And, further we will, and by these presents for us, our heirs, and successors, do grant unto the said mayor, aldermen, and burgesses of the borough aforesaid, and their successors, that for ever hereafter they shall and may have in the borough aforesaid, one discreet man skilful in the law, and

fit, who shall be called the steward of the same borough, to execute all things which do belong to the stewards of the same borough; and also, for the better execution of our pleasure in this behalf, we have assigned, named, constituted and made, and by these presents, for us, our heirs, and successors, we do assign, name, constitute, and appoint the aforesaid sir Edward Clerke the first and present steward of the borough aforesaid; which said sir Edward Clerke, before he be admitted to exercise the office of steward of the borough aforesaid, shall take his corporal oath before the mayor and aldermen so above constituted as aforesaid, or any two or more of them, to execute all things well and faithfully, which do belong to the office of steward of that borough, to be done; and, after that oath so taken, he may execute and exercise the office of steward of the same borough, and may have and take so many, so great, such, the same, and the like fees. wages, rewards, and profits, how many, how great, what manner, and what, have heretofore appertained, belonged, been incident, or incumbent, to the office of steward of the said borough, and how many, how great, what manner, and what the stewards of the same borough lawfully and anciently have received and had, or ought or were wont to receive and have, during the good will of the mayor and aldermen of the aforesaid borough for the time being, or the greater number of them.

May receive fees.

And, if it shall happen that the steward above constituted, or any other steward of that Election of borough hereafter to be chosen by virtue of these presents, shall die, leave his office, or be the steward. removed therefrom, our pleasure is, and by these presents, for us, our heirs, and successors, we do grant unto the said mayor, aldermen, and burgesses, and their successors, that after such death, leaving, or removing, viz. at a fit and convenient time, and not procrastinated by unnecessary delays, it shall and may be lawful, for the mayor and aldermen of the said borough for the time being, or the greater number of them, to elect and prefer another honest man, learned in the law, and fit, to be steward of the same borough, in the place and office of such steward so dead. leaving, or removing as aforesaid; and, that he so elected shall take his corporal oath before the mayor and aldermen of the borough aforesaid for the time being, or so many of them as will be present, to execute the office of steward of that borough, well and faithfully; and after that oath so taken, may have and exercise the office of steward of that borough, and may receive so many, so great, such, the same, and the like fees, wages, rewards, and profits, how many, how great, what manner, and what, have appertained, belonged, been incident, or incumbent to the office of steward of the said borough; and how many, how great, what manner, and what, the stewards of that borough have lawfully and anciently received and had, or ought or were wont to receive and have, during the good will of the mayor and aldermen of the said borough for the time being, or the greater part of them, and so from time to time, as often as the case shall so happen, for ever.

And further, our pleasure is, and we do by these presents ordain, that for ever hereafter, Chamberlains there may and shall be within the borough, two, who shall be called the chamberlains of the same borough; which said chamberlains shall and may, from time to time, receive and keep, in the chamber of the said borough, for the use of the mayor, aldermen, and burgesses of that borough, all, and all manner of rents, fines, amerciament, revenues, profits, commodities, and emoluments, any ways belonging or appertaining to the mayor, aldermen, and burgesses of the borough aforesaid, and their successors, in right of the corporation; and shall and may lay out and disburse the same, so received and kept, at the command and appointment of the mayor and aldermen of the same borough for the time being, or the greater number of them; and shall well and faithfully do, and execute, all other things which belong to the office of the chamberlains of the said borough; and, for the effecting our pleasure herein, we have assigned, named, constituted, and made, and by these presents, for us, our heirs, and successors, we do assign, name, constitute, and make, the aforesaid Thomas Harrison, and Peter Burningham, the first and

present chamberlains of the borough aforesaid; willing, and by these presents ordaining, that each of the aforesaid chamberlains so constituted, before he be admitted to execute the office of chamberlain within the said borough, shall take his corporal oath before the mayor and aldermen aforesaid, constituted in form aforesaid, or any two or more of them, rightly and faithfully to execute the said office in all things touching that office; and after that oath so taken, may exercise the office of one of the chamberlains of the same borough, until the last Monday in the month of August next ensuing after the date of these presents, or until himself, chamberlains, or another, be in due manner elected, preferred, and sworn in that office; and our pleasure further is, and by these presents, for us, our heirs, and successors, we do grant to the aforesaid mayor, aldermen, and burgesses, and their successors, that upon Monday which shall happen last in the month of August, yearly, for ever, it may and shall be lawful for the mayor and aldermen of the borough aforesaid for the time being, or the greater number of them, to name and elect two of the burgesses of that borough to be chamberlains of the same borough; each of which chamberlains so elected, before he be admitted to exercise the office of the chamberlains of the said borough, within that borough (to wit) upon the Monday next following after the feast of St. Michael, the archangel, next after such election made, shall take his corporal oath, before the mayor and aldermen of the same borough for the time being, or so many of them as will be present, rightfully and faithfully to execute that office in all things touching the same, and truly and justly to account, in manner hereafter declared in these presents; and after that oath so taken, may have and exercise the office of one of the chamberlains of the said borough, until the last Monday in the month of August then next ensuing, and until two others, or himself and one other, shall be duly elected, preferred, and sworn in the same office, unless in the interim he shall die, or in the manner, or for the cause hereafter mentioned, he shall be removed from that office: and so from year to year, every year, for ever. And, as often as either of the said chamberlains so elected shall die, or refuse the office of one of the chamberlains of the borough aforesaid, before he hath taken his oath, we will, and by these presents do ordain, that the like election be made anew, and that he that is newly elected, his oath being as aforesaid taken before the mayor and aldermen of the borough aforesaid for the time being, or so many of them as will be present, may execute the office of one of the chamberlains of the same borough, in form aforesaid; and, if it shall happen, that either of the aforesaid chamberlains before constituted by these presents, or any other chamberlains hereafter to be chosen by virtue of these presents, for the time being, shall die, or be removed from his office, before another shall be elected to be chamberlain of the same borough, our pleasure is, and by these presents, for us, our heirs, and successors, we do grant unto the said mayor, aldermen, and burgesses of the said borough, and their successors, that after such death, or removal, to wit, at a fit and convenient time, and not procrastinated with unnecessary delays, it may and shall be lawful for the mayor and aldermen of the same borough for the time being, or the greater number of them, to elect, prefer, and swear another of the burgesses of the same borough, to be one of the chamberlains of that borough, in the place and office of such chamberlain so dead or removed, and that he so elected, preferred, and sworn to be one of the chamberlains of the same borough, may have and exercise that office, until two other, or himself and one other, shall be duly elected, preferred, and sworn into the same office, in form aforesaid; and, in the interim, the surviving chamberlain may alone officiate, and execute that office, and so from time to time, as often as the case shall so happen, for ever.

And, our pleasure further is, and we do hereby ordain, that the aforesaid chamberlains shall yearly, when they shall be thereunto required, faithfully give a true and just account to the mayor and aldermen of that borough, or the greater part of them, of all things by them respectively received and done, as chamberlains of the borough aforesaid, to the use of the mayor,

aldermen, and burgesses of the same borough, willing that the said account so made be publicly read upon the morrow after the ending of that account, in the guild-hall of the said borough, to be publicly before the mayor, aldermen, and assistants, and all other burgesses of the borough, or so many of them as will be present, and so from year to year, for ever.\*

read.

And, our pleasure further is, and, by these presents, for us, our heirs, and successors, we do grant unto the said mayor, aldermen, and burgesses of the borough aforesaid, and their successors, that the mayor and aldermen of the same borough for the time being, or the greater part of them for the time being, shall and may, from time to time, for ever hereafter, elect and constitute one of the burgesses of the borough aforesaid, to be the coroner of the same borough; which said coroner so elected and constituted, his corporal oath being before first taken before the mayor and aldermen of the borough aforesaid for the time being, or so many of them as will be present, well and faithfully to execute that office, may and shall have full power and authority to do and execute all things which appertain to the office of coroner, to be done within the borough aforesaid, the liberties, and precincts thereof, during the good pleasure of the said mayor and aldermen of that borough for the time being, or the greater part of them, in as ample manner and form as any other coroner or coroners within any county, city, or borough of our kingdom of England; may or can exercise, or execute, his or their office or offices, so that no other coroner or coroners, of us, our heirs, or successors, do enter or presume to enter into the borough aforesaid, the liberties and precincts thereof, to do any thing that belongeth to the office of coroner or coroners.

And also, we have granted, and, by these presents, for us, our heirs, and successors, we do

Coroner.

grant, unto the said mayor, aldermen, and burgesses of the said borough, and to their successors, that, for ever hereafter, they may and shall have within the borough, three ministers, to be named and appointed by the mayor of the same borough for the time being, who shall be called sergeants at mace; every which sergeants at mace shall be, from time to time, attendant upon the mayor of the same borough for the time being, and shall bear and carry a silver, or silver-gilt mace, engraven and adorned with our royal coat of arms, every where within the said borough, the limits and precincts thereof, before the mayor of the same borough for the time being, and also shall serve in the courts of us, our heirs, and successors, of the said borough, to be holden within the said borough, to make proclamations, and to do all other things which belong to the office of a sergeant at mace, there to be done; and also shall execute and serve all and singular processes to him directed, and whatsoever other precepts given him in charge, and all other things which belong to the office of a sergeant at mace within the borough aforesaid, the liberties and precincts of the same, and shall answer in the said courts for the execution thereof. Willing and ordaining by these presents, that every one of the said sergeants at mace, before he be admitted to exercise the office of sergeant at mace, shall take his corporal oath before the mayor and aldermen of the borough aforesaid for the time being, or so many of them as shall be present, to execute his office justly, and faithfully, in all things touching the same; and, after that oath so taken, he may execute the office of one of the sergeants at mace of the same borough, during

Sergeants at mace.

And our pleasure further is, and by these presents, for us, our heirs, and successors, we do grant unto the said mayor, aldermen, and burgesses of the borough aforesaid, and their successors,

the pleasure of the mayor of the borough for the time being.

It does not appear that this regulation, though so necessary to insure a proper application of the corporate fund, was ever acted upon: The burgesses, or what may now be called the inhabitants at large, having never been considered by the corporation as being in the least connected with them; though, from the distinction made here, and in other parts of the charter, between the free burgesses and assistants, there can be no doubt that, at the time of framing the charter, the former were considered, if not a component part of the corporation, at least as interested in its concerns.

may be

Other officers that the mayor and aldermen of the same borough for the time being, or the greater part of them. may elect and prefer such, and so many other officers and ministers, what, and how many, have appointed. hitherunto been wont, or been accustomed to be elected and preferred in the same borough, if to them it shall seem expedient.

Mayor to have a casting vott.

And, in whatsoever nomination, or election, of any officer or minister of the borough aforesaid, from henceforth to be made, and in all other things and businesses whatsoever, any way concerning the said corporation, wherein these who have voices are equally divided in their votes, the mayor of the same borough for the time being, shall in that case have a casting voice.

Manor may artoine a deputy.

And, if it shall happen, that the mayor of the same borough for the time being shall be sick, or employed, or otherwise busied in the service of us, our heirs, and successors, so that he cannot attend the necessary businesses of the same borough, touching the office of mayor of that borough, then, and so often, it shall and may be lawful for the same mayor, so sick, employed, or busied, to put and constitute in his place, one of the senior aldermen of the same borough for the time being, his deputy; which said deputy, so to be put and constituted, before he be admitted to exercise the office of deputy mayor within the borough aforesaid, shall take his corporal oath, before the mayor and aldermen of the same borough for the time being, or so many of them as will be present, for the faithful execution of the same office; and, after that oath so taken, may be present at all causes or businesses any way touching the borough aforesaid, and may do and execute all things which belong to the office of mayor of the same borough, to all purposes, and in as ample manner and form as the mayor himself, during his sickness or absence, and so from time to time, as often as the case shall so happen, for ever.

And, further our pleasure is, and by these presents, for us, our heirs, and successors we do Power to fine grant unto the said mayor, aldermen, and burgesses of the borough aforesaid, and to their sucsuch as refuse cessors, that if any one that shall hereafter be duly elected to the office of mayor, alderman, and mayors, &c. assistant, or to any other office within the borough aforesaid. being a member of the said corvoration, and partaking of the liberties, and having notice of such election, shall refuse to exercise the same office unto which he shall be elected, that then, and so often, it may and shall be lawful for the mayor and aldermen of the same borough for the time being, or the greater number of them, to impose a reasonable fine or amerciament upon every one refusing, for such his refusal; and, if such person so refusing shall deny to pay the fine, or amerciament, so imposed on him, then and so often to commit every such person so denying to our prison within the borough aforesaid, and to cause him to be there detained, until he hath paid his fine or amerciament.

To commit on refusal.

And, our pleasure further is, and we do by these presents ordain, that it shall and may be Oaths to be lawful for the aforesaid sir Edward Clerke and John Harrison, or either of them, to cause the administered. oath to be taken by the aforesaid mayor above constituted by these presents, to be administered to him, and for the said mayor sir Edward Clerke and John Harrison, or any one of them, to cause the oaths to be respectively taken by the said aldermen and assistants before constituted by these presents, to be respectively administered to the said aldermen and assistants, and to the said mayor and aldermen, or any two or more of them; to cause the oaths respectively to be taken by the aforesaid steward and chamberlains before hereby constituted, to be administered to the said steward and chamberlains, without any further warrant or commission to be procured or obtained from us, our heirs, or successors, in that behalf;

Power to for offices.

And, our pleasure further is, and we do by these presents ordain, that it shall and may be lawful, as well for the mayor and steward of the same borough for the time being, to make, frame, frame oaths and ordain fit forms of oaths, to be from time to time for ever hereafter respectively taken by the officers and ministers of the same borough hereafter to be chosen, by virtue of these presents; and the said deputy mayor, as to all others, before whom such oaths ought to be taken, to cause the same oaths to be administered from time to time, to the said officers, ministers, and deputy, according to those forms, without any further warrant or commission to be obtained from us, our heirs, or successors in that behalf.

And, further our pleasure is, and by these presents, for us, our heirs, and successors, we do Aldermen, &c grant unto the said mayor, aldermen, and burgesses of the borough aforesaid, and their successors, that for ever hereafter it shall and may be lawful to the mayor and aldermen of the same borough for the time being, or the greater number of them, to remove any alderman, assistant, or chamberlain of the same borough for the time being, for misbehaving himself in his said office, or for any other reasonable and just cause.

may be removed,

town.

And, further our pleasure is, and we do ordain by these presents, that no alderman of the Not to reside borough aforesaid, unless he be very aged, and hath been four times mayor; nor any assistant out of the of that borough, that he might decline the care and burthen of government, do go out of the said borough with his family, with an intent of making his abode elsewhere, or leave his office, without the consent of the mayor and aldermen of the same borough for the time being, or the greater part of them; and, if any shall go out, and leave his office, then it shall and may be lawful for the said mayor and aldermen, or the greater part of them, to impose a reasonable fine or amerciament upon such person going out of town, or leaving his office; and, if he shall refuse to pay such fine or amerciament, then to cause such fine or amerciament to be levied by distress or distresses, or by any other lawful manner whatsoever, or to commit such person denying to our prison within the aforesaid borough, and to cause him to be there detained until he pay, or cause the said fine or amerciament to be paid.

And, our pleasure further is, and we do by these presents ordain, that every of the said aldermen and assistants of the borough aforesaid for the time being, as long as he shall continue Exempt from in his office of alderman or assistant, shall be exempt from bearing arms, in his own person, in serving in the the train bands, so that every one so exempt, at his own charge, provide a fit man, armed and prepared with such warlike instruments as he that is so exempt ought to provide, who, as often as the train-soldiers shall be mustered, to be instructed in military discipline, and to shew their arms, or for any other cause, so often, he, being so armed and prepared, shall appear for such person that is exempt, that so the safety of the kingdom be not thereby endangered; or any ways neglected.

Cottages.

And, whereas certain covetous persons, preferring their own private benefit to the public good of the said borough, have built, and daily do build, divers cottages within the said borough, the liberties, and precincts of the same, and have subdivided, and daily do subdivide, several messuages and houses fairly built, fitting for dwellings of men of the better sort, in small tenements, or rather receptacles and harbours for poor people, not only those that are natives, and people of the same borough, but also foreigners flocking thither from other places, and coming privately and intruding into the same borough, to the great grievance and manifest impoverishment of that borough, unless it be prevented by our princely care, as we are informed. We therefore seriously advising for the good of the said borough, and minding to prevent so great a Houses not to mischief, by applying a speedy remedy, we do command, and, by these presents, for us, our heirs, and successors, we do declare, that, for ever hereafter, no cottage be erected, no messuage be divided into two tenements, nor two families live asunder in one messuage either so divided or not divided, upon any demise, grant, or contract hereafter to be made within the said borough, the liberties, and precincts thereof; and, if any one presume to offend, in any case, contrary to the form and effect of these letters patent, he shall incur the pains and penalties to be ordained by the mayor, aldermen, and assistants of the borough aforesaid for the time being, or the greater number of them, in their assemblies hereafter mentioned in that behalf.

into smal! tenements,

And, because it often happens, houses and whole towns are endangered to be burned, therefore our pleasure is, and we do ordain by these presents, that no house, within the said borough,

That: I.d houses be covered with straw, stover, or any other combustible materials; and, if any one shall presume to offend herein contrary to the form and effect of these our letters patent, he shall also incur the pains and penalties to be ordained by the mayor, aldermen, and assistants of the said borough for the time being, or the greater part of them, in their said assemblies, in that behalf.

No foreigner

And, that the intrusion of foreigners may hereafter be the more easily prevented, our pleasure to reside in is, and we do hereby ordain, that no person whatsoever, being a foreigner from the liberty of the the borough. aforesaid borough, do hereafter intrude himself into the said borough, the liberties, or precincts thereof, with an intent there to make his abode: And, that no burgess of the same borough, nor any other, do receive such foreigner into his house within the said borough, the liberties, and precincts thereof, nor do let any house to any such foreigner, without the license of the mayor and aldermen of the borough aforesaid for the time being, or the greater number of them first had and obtained in that behalf. And, if any foreigner shall henceforth intrude himself into the said borough, the liberties, or precincts thereof, contrary to the form and effect of these our letters patent, it shall and may be lawful for the mayor and aldermen of the borough aforesaid for the time being, or the greater number of them, whereof the said mayor to be one, to cause such persons intruding, to be extruded, expelled, and removed out of the said borough, the liberties and precincts thereof; and, if any burgess of the said borough, or any other, shall without such license receive such foreigner into his house within the said borough, the liberties and precincts thereof, with the intent aforesaid, or shall, for that end, demise any house to such foreigner, the receiver of such person, or letter of such house, shall incur such pains and penalties as by the mayor, aldermen, and assistants of the borough aforesaid for the time being, or the greater number of them, shall, in their said assemblies, be ordained in that behalf.

Power of Esc.

And, our pleasure further is, and we do, by these presents, for us, our heirs, and successors, making laws, grant unto the said mayor, aldermen, and burgesses of the borough aforesaid, and to their successors, that, from time to time for ever hereafter, it shall and may be lawful for the mayor, aldermen, and assistants of the borough aforesaid for the time being, or the greater number of them, to meet together in the guild-hall of the said borough, or any other convenient place within that borough, and there to have assemblies; and in those assemblies so had, to confer, consult, and discourse on the statutes, laws, articles, and ordinances, any way touching the good rule, state, and government of the same borough: and, also to make, frame, constitute, ordain, and establish good, honest, wholesome, profitable, necessary, and reasonable laws, constitutions, ordinances, and provisions, according to their sound discretions, for good ruling and governing of the same borough, and of all and singular officers, ministers, tradesmen, inhabitants, and residents within the borough, the liberties and precincts thereof, and of others coming to the same borough, and for declaring in what manner and order the said mayor, aldermen, and assistants, and all and singular other officers and ministers of the borough shall respectively bear and behave themselves within the borough aforesaid, the liberties and precincts thereof, and with what garments and ornaments they shall be clad upon the Lord's days, fast days, and other solemn times, for the greater honor of the said borough, and also, how the said mayor, aldermen, and assistants, officers and ministers, and all and singular the burgesses, tradesmen, inhabitants, and residents of the borough aforesaid, the liberties and precincts thereof, shall behave and dispose of themselves in their offices, ministries, functions, mysteries, trades, and respective manners of living within the same borough, the liberties and precincts thereof, for the public good and common weal of the said borough; and, for the discovery of frauds and sophistications used in making and compounding of wares, and for the reforming thereof; and also for victualling of the said borough, and for better restraint of the building of cottages, the dividing and subdividing of one messuage into two dwellings, for the habitation of two families in one and the same messuage; and of covering houses with straw, or other combustible matter, within the said

borough, the liberties and precincts thereof; and for the restraint of the intrusion and reception of foreigners into the said borough, the liberties and precincts thereof; and the letting of any house there to any such foreigner; and also for the better preserving, ordering, disposing, placing, and demising of the lands, tenements, possessions, revenues, and hereditaments, heretofore given. granted, or assigned unto the burgesses of the same borough, or to the mayor and burgesses of that borough, in their politic capacity, by whatsoever name or names, or hereafter to be given. granted, or assigned to the said mayor, aldermen, and burgesses, and also for other matters and things whatsoever, touching or any way concerning the said borough, the liberties or precints thereof, to put the same laws, constitutions, ordinances, and provisions so framed, ordained, and established, in due execution: which laws, constitutions, ordinances, and provisions we command shall be observed, under such pains and penalties, to be inflicted upon offenders against them, by imprisonment of body, or by reasonable fines or amerciaments, or both, to be contained in the same laws, ordinances, and provisions, as to the said mayor, aldermen, and assistants of the borough aforesaid for the time being, or the greater number of them, shall seem necessary to be imposed, for the better observing of the same laws, constitutions, ordinances, and provisions, and that they may cause the same fines and amerciaments so imposed to be levied by distress or distresses, or by any other lawful manner, so that those laws, constitutions, ordinances, and provisions, and the pains and penalties to be contained in the same, be not contrary to the laws, statutes, or customs of our kingdom of England.

And, our pleasure further is, and, by these presents, for us, our heirs, and successors, we do Fines for the grant unto the said mayor, aldermen, and burgesses of the said borough, and to their successors, use of the that they and their successors may take, and have to the use and better support of the said corporation. corporation, all and singular fines, amerciaments, and sums of money, by virtue of these presents imposed, or to be imposed upon whatsoever burgess, for what cause soever, within the said borough, the liberties and precincts thereof, without the occasion or impediment of us, our heirs, or successors, and without any account to be therefore rendered to us, our heirs, or successors, so that the common stock of the said corporation be not converted to private uses, but being safely kept by the said chamberlains, be disposed of, for the discharging of the politic affairs of the aforesaid borough, for the common benefit of the burgesses of the same borough, and no otherwise, in any wise.

And, as often as any burthen shall oppress the said town, or any extraordinary occasion shall happen, for discharging whereof the common stock of the same town will not suffice, our oppressing the pleasure is, and we do by these presents ordain, that, so often, it may and shall be lawful for the paid from the mayor and aldermen of the said borough for the time being, or the greater number of them, common stock. whereof the mayor of the said borough for the time being, to be one, to assess every burgess of the aforesaid borough, according to his estate or family, towards that burthen, or occasion, and if any burgess shall refuse to pay it, to levy the money assessed upon him, by distresses, or sufficient, to by any other lawful way, and to dispose of that money being paid or levied, to the use for which assessment; it was assessed.

And, that full and speedy justice may be the better administered, within the said borough, to all our subjects there residing, and coming thither (as the law requires) our pleasure is, and we do by these presents ordain, that the mayor and deputy mayor of the said borough, and the right reverend father in Christ, the lord bishop of Sarum, and his chancellor or commissary, the senior alderman, and he that was or shall be, yearly, the last mayor of the same borough for the time being, may and shall be our justices, and every of them may, and shall be the justice of us, our heirs, and successors, for the keeping of the peace of us, our heirs, and successors, within the borough aforesaid, the liberties, and precincts thereof; and, also for the keeping of the statutes, and ordinances made at Winchester, Northampton, and Westminster, for the keeping

Fustices.

of the same peace, and the statutes and ordinances made there, concerning hunters, laborers, artificers, servants, innkeepers, beggars, vagabonds, and other beggars who call themselves travelling men, and also of another statute made in the parliament of king Henry the fifth, holden at Westminster aforesaid, concerning the counterfeiting, clipping, washing, and other falsities of the money of our land, and for the keeping of all other statutes and ordinances, in all their articles made, and to be made, for the good of the peace of us, our heirs, and successors, and for the quiet ruling and governing of the people, of us, our heirs, and successors, within the borough aforesaid, the limits, and precincts thereof, according to the force, form, and effect thereof, and to cause all those whom they shall find to offend against the form of the said ordinances, and statutes, to be chastised, and punished, and to cause all those who shall threaten any of the people of us, our heirs, and successors, of hurting their bodies, or burning their houses, to find sufficient security for their peace, and good behavior towards us, and all the people of us, our heirs, and successors; and, if they shall refuse to find such security, to cause them to be safely kept in the prison of us, our heirs, and successors, until they shall find such security.

To inquire into misdemeanors.

And further, that they or any two of them, (whereof the mayor or deputy mayor of the aforesaid borough for the time being to be one) shall have full power and authority for ever hereafter, to enquire, as well by the oath of good and lawful men of the borough aforesaid, the liberties and precincts thereof, by whom the truth may be the better known, of all manner of felonies, trespasses, forestallers, regraters, and extortions, by whomsoever and howsoever done, and perpetrated, or that shall happen hereafter to be done within the borough aforesaid, the liberties, and precincts thereof; and also of all and singular other things howsoever done, attempted, or perpetrated, within the borough aforesaid, the liberties and precincts thereof, and which shall there happen to be done, attempted, or perpetrated, that are inquirable by the keepers of the peace, of us, our heirs, and successors, and by the justices of us, our heirs, and successors, assigned, or to be assigned, to enquire of such like felonies, trespasses, and offences, in any county of our kingdom of England, by virtue of the aforesaid ordinances and statutes, or other ordinances, or statutes heretofore made, or hereafter to be made, according to the force and effect of the letters patents of us, our heirs, and successors. to them for that purpose made, or to be made; and to hear, and determine according to the law and custom of our kingdom of England, and the form of the aforesaid ordinances and statutes before them, the said mayor, deputy-mayor, lord bishop, his chancellor or commissary, the senior alderman. and that alderman, who, as aforesaid, was, or shall be last mayor, or any two of them, whereof the mayor, or deputy mayor for the time being to be one; all and singular the premises and other things, whatsoever done, attempted, or committed, or to be done, attempted, or committed, within the borough aforesaid, the liberties and precincts thereof, which may be discussed or determined by the keepers of the peace, of us, our heirs, and successors, and the justices of us, our heirs, and successors, assigned, and to be assigned, by virtue of the aforesaid ordinances, statutes, and letters-patent, to hear and determine such felonies, trespasses, and offences, in any county of our kingdom of England, so that all writs, precepts, and other warrants to be made for the premises, and every of them to be directed to the ministers of the aforesaid borough, and be by them executed, without any writ, precept, or warrant, to be directed to the sheriff or coroners of our county of Berks.

County interfere.

So also, that the keepers of the peace of us, our heirs, and successors, assigned or to be assigned, justices not to to hear and determine such felonies, trespasses, and offences, done, or committed in our county of Berks, or any of them, do not enter into the aforesaid borough, the liberties and precincts thereof, to do any thing which doth belong to such keepers of the peace, or justices, or intermeddle therein, in any manner.

Justices to be sworn.

Commanding that every one of the said mayor, deputy mayor, lord bishop, his chancellor or commissary, senior alderman, and that alderman which was or shall have been last mayor for the time being, before he be admitted to exercise the office of justice of the peace, within the said borough,

the liberties and precincts thereof, shall take his corporal oath, upon the holy evangelists, according to the laws and statutes of our kingdom of England, provided, in that behalf, well and faithfully to execute the office of justice of the peace, within the borough aforesaid, the liberties and precincts thereof, before the steward of the aforesaid borough for the time being, to whom, for us, our heirs, and successors, we do give and grant full power and authority to administer such oath.

And, lest any thing should be admitted into the said borough from whence the burgesses thereof Power to should be corrupted, or our peace disturbed, we do command that the said justices of the peace of the grant licences. said borough for the time being, do not hereafter permit any person to sell beer or ale within the said borough, the liberties, and precincts thereof, without a licence being first had, and obtained, in that behalf, and that they do not grant such licence rashly or unadvisedly to any: but if they do at all grant any, let that licence so granted be made in writing, and subscribed by two justices of the peace for the time being, whereof the mayor or his deputy to be one, otherwise that licence shall be void.

And, our pleasure further is, and by these presents, for us, our heirs, and successors, we do grant unto the said mayor, aldermen, and burgesses of the borough aforesaid, and to their successors, that it shall and may be lawful to and for the said mayor, deputy mayor, lord bishop, his chancellor or commissary, the eldest alderman, and that alderman which was last mayor, or deputy mayor, to be one, to have, hold, and keep a sessions of the peace, every year, at the four times of the year, according to the form of a statute in that behalf provided, in the guild-hall of the said borough, or in some other convenient place within that borough, of all things, matters, causes, and offences coming, happening, or arising, done, or committed, within the said borough, the liberties or precincts thereof, and shall and may do, and execute, all and singular things in the same sessions of the peace, in as ample manner and form, as justices of the peace, in the said county of Berks, in the sessions of the peace to be holden for that county, may do or execute the same.

And, our pleasure further is, and we do hereby, for us, our heirs, and successors, grant unto the said mayor, aldermen, and burgesses of the borough aforesaid, and to their successors, that for ever hereafter they may hold and have, within the borough aforesaid, for ever, a court of record, to be holden on Wednesday every week through the year, except the weeks of christmas, easter, and penticost, before the mayor and aldermen, or deputy mayor and aldermen of the same borough for the time being, or any two of them, whereof the said mayor or his deputy to be one, and that in the same court they may hold, by plaint to be levied in that court, all and singular pleas of debt, detinue, breaking of covenant, account, trespass, trespasses upon the case, taking and detaining of goods and chattels, and all and singular other personal pleas, had, moved, committed, or happening, within the borough aforesaid, the liberties, and precincts thereof, if the same pleas do not exceed the sum of ten pounds of lawful money of England, and also, shall and may cause the persons against whom Not exceeding such plaint shall be levied, in due manner of law, to be attached by their goods and chattels, within ten pounds. the borough aforesaid, the liberties and precincts thereof, or to cause them to be there arrested by their bodies, and to cause their bodies so arrested to be committed to prison, and also shall and may, in like due manner of law, bring all and singular the said pleas, and judgments, and to hear and determine them, and to cause executions to be thereupon, in as ample manner and form, as is accustomed in our city of London.

And, if it shall happen, that any complaint, matter, plea, or special verdict, shall be entangled with so great doubts and difficulties, that it cannot be fully heard, discussed, and determined, upon the said Wednesday, it may and shall be lawful for the mayor and aldermen, or the deputy mayor and aldermen, being present at the hearing of that complaint, matter, plea, or verdict, from time to time to adjourn the same complaint, matter, plea, or verdict, either unto the next day, or unto the next court day, at the pleasure of the same mayor and aldermen, or deputy mayor and aldermen being present, and then the mayor and aldermen, or deputy mayor and aldermen of the borough aforesaud

To holi quarter sessions.

Court of record.

Power to adjourn. for the time being, or any two of them, whereof the said mayor or his deputy to be one, to proceed to the full hearing, discussing, and final determination thereof.

Power to take ice.

And, our pleasure further is, and by these presents we do declare, that the mayor and aldermen, or the deputy mayor and aldermen of the aforesaid borough for the time being, before whom the aforesaid court may be holden for ever hereafter, take and have to their own proper uses, so many, so great, such, the same, and the like fees, emoluments, and profits, of the same court, how many, how great, what manner, and what, have belonged, appertained, been incident, or incumbent to, whatsoever the judges of any the like courts of record, heretofore held within the aforesaid borough, and how many, how great, what manner, and what, the same judges in like cases have taken and had, or ought or were wont to take and have.

And, our pleasure further is, and we do hereby ordain, that, for ever hereafter, there may and Actornies, shall be in the borough aforesaid, four attornies of the aforesaid court, to be named and appointed by the mayor and aldermen of the borough for the time being, or the greater number of them, to prosecute and defend all actions commenced, and complaints levied, in the said court of record as aforesaid, and also, to do and execute all other things which belong to the office of attornies to be done and executed; every one of which attornies so named and appointed, before he be admitted to exercise the office of attorney of the court aforesaid, shall take his corporal oath before the mayor of the borough aforesaid for the time being, for the faithful execution of his office of attorney of that court; to which mayor we do by these presents give power to frame and administer such an oath; and, after that oath so taken, he may exercise the office of one of the attornies of that court, during the good pleasure of the mayor and aldermen of the borough aforesaid for the time being, or the greater number of them; and, for the exercise and execution of the same office or ministry, may take and have the wages, fees, and rewards, by the same mayor and aldermen, or the greater number of them, to be ordained, settled, or appointed in that behalf.

Small debts.

And, that contentions and controversies begun, and hereafter to be begun, between the poorer burgesses of the same borough for petty matters, may be the more easily composed, if they be not utterly taken away; our pleasure is, and we do ordain by these presents, that from time to time, for ever hereafter, it shall and may be lawful for the mayor and aldermen, or deputy mayor and aldermen, of the same borough for the time being, or any two of them, whereof the said mayor or deputy mayor to be one, to call before them both parties, as well the plaintiff as defendant, in whatsoever plea, suit, cause, or action, moved, or to be moved between such poor burgesses, in the court of record of the same borough, so that the debt, damage, or value, supposed or demanded in the same plea, suit, cause, or action, do not exceed the sum of five shillings; and, if they can, to compose the contention, and controversy thereupon; and, if they cannot, then the witnesses being produced on both sides, and examined viva voce, to hear, and finally to determine, such plea, suit, cause or action, according to their sound discretion, which said determination, made in form aforesaid, shall be definitive, and shall conclude both parties in every such plea, suit, cause, or action, so heard and determined, that so, that which is gotten by their labor, for their subsistance, may not be exhausted in contending; and that, as much as may be, concord, amongst the members of the same body, may be kept firm, for ever.

Orphans court.

And, further of our special grace, certain knowledge, and meer motion, we have given and granted, and by these presents, for us, our heirs, and successors, we do give and grant unto the said mayor, aldermen, and burgesses of the borough aforesaid, and to their successors, that for ever hereafter, there be had, within the borough aforesaid, a certain court to be holden before the mayor and aldermen, or deputy mayor and aldermen of the same borough, for the time being, or the greater part of them, whereof the said mayor, or his deputy, to to be one, in some convenient place, in that borough, once in every week, at the mayor's or deputy mayor's appointment, for the government of orphans of freemen and free women of the some borough, who, by writing, or by their last wills in writing respectively made in their lives, or at the time of death, shall commend their orphans to the tuition of the mayor, aldermen, and burgesses of the same borough, which court shall be called the court of orphans of the borough aforesaid, and that it shall and may be lawful for the same court, to settle and dispose of the custody of goods and chattels, rights, credits, and monies of such orphans, in such manner and form as the court of orphans in London, by an ancient custom of the same city, ought, and is wont to settle and dispose the same.

Provided always, that the said court shall allow towards the education and maintenance of such orphans, according to the rate of four pounds at least in the hundred, for every year, so long as they shall remain in the tuition of the mayor, aldermen, and burgesses of the borough aforesaid, and that the same mayor, aldermen, and burgesses, and their successors, shall be from time to time responsible, and shall be chargeable to the aforesaid orphans, of and for all sums of money, goods, and chattels, received into their hands, and of the profits of the same, after the rate aforesaid, to what person or persons soever the said court shall commit the same, or any part thereof: And, that the mayor, aldermen, and burgesses of the borough aforesaid, and their successors, shall, from time to time, give security under the common seal of the same borough, for restitution of all goods, and for the safe payment of all sums of money so by them received, so that the said or phans do apply themselves for satisfaction in that behalf, to no other person or persons than the mayor, aldermen, and burgesses of the said borough, to whose tuition they are committed.

And, our pleasure further is, and for us, our heirs, and successors, we do grant unto the said

mayor, aldermen, and burgesses of the borough aforesaid, and their successors, that the mayor of the the mariet, same borough for the time being, or his deputy, may, and for ever hereafter shall be clerk of the market of us, our heirs, and successors, within the borough aforesaid, the limits and precincts of the same, and as well in the presence as in the absence of us, our heirs, and successors, may have and exercise assize, and assay of bread, wine, ale, and beer, and also the custody and assize of weights, measures, and all other things appertaining to the clerk of the market there, and may in a due manner punish the transgressors of the said assize of bread, wine, ale, and beer, and may correct and amend the defects of measures and weights, and other things belonging to the office of clerk of the market, and as often as need shall require, may there do and execute all things as fully and entirely as the clerk of the market of the household of us, our heirs, and successors might or ought, if this present grant had not been made, so that the clerk of the market of the household of us, our heirs, and successors, or any other minister of us, our heirs, and successors, do not enter into the same borough, the limits or precincts thereof, to do any thing which doth belong to the office of clerk of the market, or do in any wise intermeddle therein, and if any one shall intermeddle, then it may and shall be lawful for the mayor, aldermen, and burgesses of the borough for the time being, in a lawful manner, to resist him so intermeddling, and in no wise to permit him so intermeddling to execute the office of clerk of the market, and this without the impeachment of us, our heirs, or successors, or any other whomsoever, and that each of the said mayors, and their deputies for the time being, before he be admitted to exercise the office of the clerk of the market within the borough, shall take his corporal oath, before the aldermen of the same borough for the time being, or so many of them as will be present, faithfully to exercise the office of clerk of the market within that borough, the liberties, and precincts

And further, we have granted, and, by these presents, for us, our heirs, and successors, we do grant unto the said mayor, aldermen, and burgesses of the borough aforesaid, and their successors, that the mayor of the same borough for the time being, together with the clerk deputed for the taking of recognizances, according to the form of the statute of merchants and the statute of Actor

or successors, in that behalf.

thereof; to which aldermen we do by these presents give full power and authority to administer such an oath without further warrant or commission to be procured or obtained from us, our heirs,

Clerk of the mariet.

Recogni-

Burnell, may, for ever, have full power and authority, to take and receive whatsoever recognizances for debts, according to the aforesaid statute of merchants and statute of Acton Burnell, and also to make executions thereupon, and to do all other things respectively belonging to such mayor and clerk, according to the form of the said statute, and the steward of the same borough for the time being, may, and for ever hereafter shall be the clerk of us, our heirs, and successors, to take recognizances of debts according to the form of the aforesaid statute, and that the said mayor and clerk may have a seal consisting of two parts, to wit, a greater and a less, for the sealing of all recognizances to be taken within the said borough, the liberties and precincts thereof, according to the form of the aforesaid statute, and that the said greater part of the same seal shall remain in the custody of the mayor, and the lesser part thereof in the custody of the steward for the time being.

Seal in two parts.

Water bailiff.

Our pleasure further is, and, by these presents, for us, our heirs, and successors, we do ordain, that the mayor of the same borough, for the time being, may, and for ever hereafter shall be the bailiff of us, our heirs, and successors, of all and singular rivers, streams, and waters running within the said borough, the limits and precincts thereof, and shall have the survey, and conservation of the same; and we will, and by these presents for us, our heirs, and successors, we do grant unto the said mayor, aldermen, and burgesses of the borough aforesaid, and their successors, that they may take and have all manner of fines, and amerciaments, hereafter to be imposed upon any one whomsoever, offending in or about the said rivers, streams, or waters, and all forfeitures to be forfeited by any such delinquent, to the use and supportation of the said corporation, without the let, or hinderance, of us, our heirs, and successors, or of any officer or minister of us, our heirs, or successors, and without any account, or other thing whatsoever, to be rendered, paid, or done, to us, our heirs, or successors, in that behalf.

Bridges.

And, whereas the bridges within the borough aforesaid, the limits and precincts of the same, are so ruinous and broken, that great danger may easily happen to men passing over those bridges, and we, considering how great a charge it will be to the men and free burgesses of the same borough, who ought and are wont to repair and maintain the same, of our special grace, certain knowledge, and meer motion, we will, and by these presents, for us, our heirs, and successors, we do grant unto the said mayor, aldermen, and burgesses of the borough aforesaid, and to their successors, that for ever hereafter they may and shall have pontage of our subjects, being foreigners from the liberties of the same borough, passing the same bridges with a wain or horse loaden, that is to say, for every wain laden, two pence; and for every horse loaded with a pack, a half penny. And, if such foreigner shall refuse such pontage, it may be lawful for the same mayor, aldermen, and burgesses, and their successors, to restrain him that shall so refuse payment of passage; or if he shall pass over, to levy the pontage of the wain or horse wherewith he hath passed over.

Pontage.

Cavershambridge toll. And, whereas a certain bridge called Caversham bridge, whereof one half is in Reading, and the other half in Caversham, in the county of Oxon, is built across the river of Thames, the foundation of which bridge is often shaken with barges passing under that bridge, so that those foundations, by reason of the same shaking, do oftentimes become ruinous and broken, and as often as the said half in Reading is ruinous and broken in any part thereof, the men and burgesses of the borough aforesaid ought, and are wont, to repair the said half so ruinous or broken. Therefore we will, and by these presents, do grant, unto the aforesaid mayor, aldermen, and burgesses, and their successors, that, for the better repairing and maintaining of the same half of the said bridge in Reading aforesaid, it may, and for ever hereafter shall be lawful for the same mayor, aldermen, and burgesses, and their successors, to take, and have, for every barge passing under the said half of the same bridge, in Reading aforesaid, of the owner, or hirer of that barge, four-pence, of lawful money of England, in the name of passage. And, if such owner, or hirer, shall refuse to pay the said four-pence for the cause aforesaid, it may be lawful for the same mayor, aldermen, and burgesses, and their successors, to hinder any one so refusing,

of passage, with such barge, under the same, or if that barge shall pass under the same half, to cause the four-pence to be levied of the same barge, or of the goods and merchandise being in the same.

And, least that the limits, or bounds, of the borough aforesaid, although sufficiently known, yet in succession of time should vanish out of the frail memory of men, from whence conten- Perambulations and discords may arise: We will, and, by these presents, for us, our heirs, and successors, we tions to be do grant unto the aforesaid mayor, aldermen, and burgesses of the borough aforesaid, and their successors, that it may and shall be lawful for the same mayor, aldermen, and burgesses, and their successors, yearly, for ever hereafter, to make perambulations of the aforesaid borough, the limits and precincts thereof, by meets and divisions to be put and erected in necessary places, and, as often as need shall be, to be renewed, that so a certain knowledge of these limits, and bounds, may be retained for ever.

made.

And, our pleasure further is, and, by these presents, for us, our heirs, and successors, we do grant, and give licence, unto the aforesaid mayor, aldermen, and burgesses of the borough aforesaid, and purchase land their successors, that they and their successors, whensoever to them it shall seem expedient, shall and may purchase and receive manors, messuages, lands, tenements, rents, and hereditaments, with the appertenances, of whatsoever person or persons that shall be willing to grant, bequeath, assign, or alien the same unto them, to have and to hold the same manors, lands, tenements, rents, and hereditaments with the appertenances, to them and their successors, for the support of the said corporation, so that those manors, lands, tenements, rents, and hereditaments, with their appertenances, do not exceed the yearly value of five hundred pounds, above all reprises, nor be held of us, our heirs, and successors immediately in capite, or by knights service. And, we do give full power, authority, and licence, by these presents, to the same person or persons, so being willing to give, grant, bequeath, assign, or alien, manors, messuages, lands, tenements, or hereditaments, with their appertenances, that he or they may be able to give, grant, bequeath, assign, or alien, manors, messuages, lands, tenements. rents, and hereditaments, with their appertenances, to the same mayor, aldermen, and burgesses, and their successors, to have and to hold, in form aforesaid, so that those manors, messuages, lands, tenements, rents, and hereditaments, with their appertenances, do not exceed the yearly value of five hundred pounds, above all reprises, nor be held of us, our heirs, and successors, immediately in capite, or by knights service, or of any other by knights service, the statutes concerning lands, not to be put to mortmain, in any wise notwithstanding.

And further, we will, and, by these presents, for us, our heirs and successors, we do ratify and Ratification confirm unto the aforesaid mayor, aldermen, and burgesses, and their successors, all and singular, so of the above. many, so great, such, the same, such manner, and the like, manors, messuages, lands, tenements, wastes, waste grounds, tythes, oblations, common of pasture, purprestures,\* rents, revenues, services, fairs, markets, courts of pye-powder, venue of frank pledge, and other courts, returns of writs, fishings, waters, conservation of waters, banks, wharfs, keys, trovage, tolls, stallage, pontage, murage, goods, and chattels, waifes, stays, treasure found, fines, amerciaments, profits, commodities, advantages, emoluments, hereditaments, gaols, free schools, power of naming and removing a master or masters. a teacher or teachers of those schools, authorities, liberties, privileges, rights, jurisdictions, immunities, easements, and exemptions whatsoever, how many, how great, what manner, and what, the men and free burgesses of the borough aforesaid, or by whatsoever name called, or by whatsoever incorporation incorporated, now lawfully have, hold, enjoy, or use, or how many, how great, what manner, and what, they, or any of them, or their predecessors, burgesses of the aforesaid borough, by whatsoever name or names, or by whatsoever incorporation they have been known or incorporated, have heretofore lawfully had, held, enjoyed, or used, or ought to have, hold, enjoy, or use, to them and their

whatsoever other lawful means, right, title, custom, prescription, or use, heretofore lawfully used, had, or accustomed, although for any cause whatsoever, they are forfeited, or not forfeited unto us, or any of our progenitors, or predecessors (except all and singular things contrary to these presents, or any clause, or grant, contained in the same, or excepted in any charter of grant or confirmation, heretofore made to the burgesses of the borough aforesaid, by whatsoever name, by any of our progenitors, or ancestors, to be had, held, exercised, and enjoyed, by the aforesaid mayor, aldermen, and burgesses of the borough aforesaid, and their successors, for ever, to the only proper use and behoof of the same mayor, aldermen, and burgesses, and their successors under the ancient form therefore due, or accustomed, and to be rendered to us.)

Willing that the said mayor, aldermen, and burgesses, and their successors, may for ever have, hold, enjoy, exercise, and use, all those manors, messuages, lands, tenements, wastes, waste grounds, tythes, oblations, common of pasture, purprestures, rents, revenues, services, fairs, markets, courts of pye powder, venue of frank pledge, and other courts, return of writs, fishings, waters, conservations of waters, banks, wharfs, keys, tolls, piccage, stallage, pontage, murage, goods and chattels, waifes, strays, treasure found, fines, amerciaments, profits, commodities, advantages, emoluments, hereditaments, gaols, free schools, powers to name and remove a master or masters, teacher or teachers, of those schools, authorities, privileges, rights, jurisdictions, immunities, easements, and exemptions, except as is before excepted, according to the true intent of these presents, without the let, or hinderance, of us, our heirs, and successors, or any the justices, sheriffs, bailiffs, officers, or ministers, of us, our heirs, or successors whomsoever. Willing that the mayor, aldermen, and burgesses of the borough aforesaid, or any of the justices, officers, or ministers, of us, our heirs, or successors, of the aforesaid borough, be not impeached, molested, or compelled to answer for the due use, claim, or abuse, of any liberties, franchises, or jurisdictions, heretofore made.

Willing further, and by these presents, unto the said mayor, aldermen, and burgesses of the borough aforesaid, and their successors, that they and their successors may, for ever hereafter, have, hold, take, use, and enjoy, the full and entire profit and benefit of all and singular, gifts, grants, bargains, recognizances, obligations, annuities, and sums of money, before the date of these presents, any wise given, granted, bequeathed, acknowledged, disposed, or appointed by any person or persons to the aforesaid burgesses, and their successors, by whatsoever name or names, or by whatsoever incorporation, to whatsoever use or uses, together with power of recovering and receiving the same, in whose hands soever the same do or shall happen to remain, as fully and entirely as the burgesses of the same borough, by whatsoever name or names, or by whatsoever incorporation, might have, recover, and receive the same, if these presents had not been made; further commanding, and by these presents granting, that the said mayor, aldermen, and burgesses of the borough aforesaid, may and shall have, these our letters-patent in due manner made and sealed, under our great seal of England, without fine or fee, great or small, to be therefore rendered, paid, or made to us, our hanaper, or otherwise to our use. Lastly, we will, and by these presents, for us, our heirs, and successors, we do grant unto the said mayor, aldermen, and burgesses, of the aforesaid borough, and their successors, that these our letterspatent, or the enrolment of the same, and all and singular clauses, and grants therein contained, may and shall be good, firm, valid, and effectual, in all things, according to our real intentions, and shall be taken, construed, reputed, and adjudged, in all courts, and before whatsoever judges, justices, officers, or ministers, of us, our heirs, or successors, most strongly, and benignly, in favor of the said mayor, aldermen, and burgesses, and their successors, against us, our heirs, and successors, notwithstanding the not particularly mentioning the manors, messuages, lands, tenements, wastes, waste-grounds, tithes, purprestures, rents, hereditaments, fishings, waters, con-

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servation of waters, banks, wharfs, quays, tolls, authorities, liberties, customs, immunities, privileges, or exemptions, had, used, or enjoyed, by the burgesses of the aforesaid borough, by whatsoever name, or incorporation, and notwithstanding the not taking or not finding any inquisition by virtue of any writ of ad quod damnum, to be directed to the sheriff of our county of Berks, to enquire of the damage, prejudice or harm of the premises, or any of them, or any other uncertainty, or imperfections in these presents, or in any clause, or grant in the same contained, and although express mention of the true yearly value, or any other value, or certainty of the premises, or of any other gifts, charters, or grants, made or granted by us, or any of our progenitors, or predecessors to the aforesaid men, and free burgesses, and their successors, by whatsoever name, or names, in these presents, is not made, or any statute, act, ordinance, provision, proclamation, or restraint heretofore made, published, ordained, or provided, or any other thing, cause, or matter whatsoever to the contrary thereof, in any wise notwithstanding.

In witness whereof, we have caused these our letters to be made patent.

Witness ourself at Westminster, this seventeenth day of December, in the fourteenth year of our reign.

C. REX.

### Appendix B.

Translation of a deed of gift made by John Leche, alias John a Larder, to the mayor and corporation of Reading.

Sciant presentes et futuri, &c. KNOW all men present and to come, that I, John Leche, alias John a Larder, esq. have given and granted, and by these presents have confirmed, to Mr. Robert Gery, gentleman, John Hanger of London, gentleman, William Aspull, gentleman, John Briminger, of London, draper, John Dry, citizen of London, William Perncote, John Upstone, Thomas James, and John Norfolke, of Reading, all that my capital messuage, with its appertenances, and my five small tenements with their appertenances adjoining to the said capital messuage, situated and built together, and upon a certain spot of waste land, lying in Reading aforesaid, in the county of Berks, in a certain street called Old-street, in the parish of St. Mary in Reading aforesaid, that is to say, between a certain tenement belonging to the abbot and convent of St. Mary in Reading aforesaid, belonging to the office of keeper of the chapel of the aforesaid monastery on the south part, and a certain tenement on the west part of the said tenement, belonging to the aforesaid chapel of St. Mary on the north part, and containing in length one hundred and thirty-five statute feet, and seventeen statute feet in breadth, which said plot of waste land, by the name of the plot of waste land, I the said John Leche bought for myself, my heirs, and assigns, by a perpetual exheriditation, demission, and feoffment, and by the confirmation of John, abbot of the monastery of St. Mary in Reading aforesaid, and the convent of the same, as more fully will appear by referring to a certain indenture.

Moreover I have given and granted, and by these presents have confirmed, to the aforesaid Roger Gery, John Hanger, William Aspull, John Briminger, John Dry, William Perncote, John Upstone, Thomas James, and John Norfolke, one waste piece of land, with its appertenances, lying in the said town, viz. a garden belonging to the said church of St. Mary, containing, towards the north part, in length, thirty eight statute feet, and twenty-six statute feet in breadth, which said piece of waste ground, together with the other piece of waste ground aforesaid, with their appertenances, I, the said John Leche, have purchased by exheredation. demission, and feoffment, and by the confirmation of the said John, the abbot and the convent, as may appear more fully contained in the aforesaid indenture. And, moreover I have given and granted, and by this my deed have confirmed, to the said Roger Gery, John Hanger, William Aspull, John Briminger, John Dry, William Perncote, John Upstone, Thomas James, and John Norfolke, all that tenement situated in the town of Reading, in a certain place opposite the Corn-cheaping, between the tenement of Thomas Beke on the south side, and the tenement late in the occupation of John Sawyer, but now of Christopher Dunster, on the north side, and also two acres and a half of arable land, lying in a certain field, in that part of Reading aforesaid called Erle-field, which tenement, with its appertenances, and the said two acres and a half of arable land, I the said John Leche, alias John a Larder, lately purchased for myself, my heirs, and assigns, for ever, by the dismission, release, and confirmation of the aforesaid John Dry, and Robert Cowper, as appears from a certain writing for that intent made.

Also, I give and grant to the aforesaid Robert Gery, John Hanger, William Aspull, John Briminger, John Dry, William Perncote, John Upstone, Thomas James, and John Norfolke, all that my tenement and garden adjacent, with their appertenances, situated in Reading aforesaid, in a certain street called London-street, on the west side of that street, between a tenement belonging to the church of St. Giles, in Reading, on the south part, and a tenement belonging to Robert Mansfield, esq. on the north part; which tenement, with the adjoining garden, and their appertenances, I, the said John Leche, alias John a Larder, bought of the aforesaid John

Dry, who, by a certain writing, yielded and surrendered up, for himself and his heirs, all his right, title, claim, and interest, in the said tenement and garden, with their appertenances, to me, the said John Leche, alias John a Larder, my heirs and assigns, by the release, feoffment, and confirmation of Christopher Dunster and Gilbert Sawyer, as in a certain writing for that purpose made will more fully appear.

Also, I have given and granted, and by this present writing confirmed, to the aforesaid Roger Gery, John Hanger, William Aspull, John Briminger, John Dry, William Perncote, John Upstone, Thomas James, and John Norfolke, all that my tenement, with its appertenances, situated in Reading aforesaid, in a certain street called Old-street, on the Seven-bridges, between a certain tenement of the abbot and convent in Reading aforesaid, on the north part, and by a water-course of the river Kennet, on the south part, which said tenement, with its appertenances, I, the aforesaid John Leche, alias John a Larder, bought, together with the aforesaid John Dry, by the name of John Dry, citizen of London, dwelling at Billingsgate at London; who, by his writing, has, for himself and his heir, lately released and surrendered the same up to me, and my assigns, for ever, by the gift, grant, and confirmation of Thomas Webbe, of Reading aforesaid, tanner, as by a certain writing for that intent made will more fully appear.

To have and to hold all and singular the above mentioned messuages, tenements, gardens, and waste plots of ground, with all and singular their appertenances, to the aforesaid Roger Gery, John Hanger, William Aspull, John Briminger, John Dry, William Perncote, John Upstone, Thomas James, and John Norfolke, their heirs and assigns, for ever, for the fulfilling the will of me, the aforesaid John Leche alias John a Larder.

And I, the aforesaid John Leche, alias John a Larder, and my heirs, will warrant, and for ever defend against all people, by these presents, all and singular the said messuages, tenements, gardens, and waste plots of ground, with all and singular their appertenances, to the aforesaid Roger Gery, John Hanger, William Aspull, John Briminger, John Dry, William Perncote, John Upstone, Thomas James, and John Norfolke, their heirs and assigns.

Know ye, moreover, that I, the aforesaid John Leche, alias John a Larder, have made, ordained, and, by these presents, in my place, appointed, Richard Carpenter of Reading aforesaid, yeoman, and William Broome, of the same place, dyer, my true and lawful attornies, conjointly and separately, to deliver over for me, to the said Roger Gery, John Hanger, William Aspull, John Briminger, John Dry, William Perncote, John Upstone, Thomas James, and John Norfolke, full and peaceful seizure, and possession, in and over all and singular the aforesaid messuages, tenements, gardens and waste plots of ground, with all and every their appertenances, and whatsoever these my attornies shall do, in persuance of this my will, I hereby by this present writing ratify and confirm.

In witness whereof I have hereunto set my seal, in the presence of Thomas Beke, mayor, John Derling, and Henry Justice, bailiffs of the said borough, Robert Evydington, Richard Cleche, John Pasteller, Thomas Hert, Simon Nashe, and others.

Given the 10th day of February, in the 16th year of the reign of Edward the IVth, since the conquest.

[In his will, after devising his clothes, &c. he continues]-

Also, I will, that my executers above mentioned, out of the money arising from the debts owing to me, and to be received by them, do cause to be constructed and built three almshouses, for three poor people, near to those my five alms-houses, situated together in the town of Reading aforesaid, which five alms-houses I have lately caused to be built for the reception of five poor people.

3.1

And, moreover, I will, that my aforesaid executers, out of my debts so to be received by them, shall buy lands and tenements to the yearly value of ——— marks sterling over and above all incumbrances and reprisals.

And I will, that after the said lands and tenements shall be thus purchased, that then my said executers shall provide and ordain, that the aforesaid eight poor people may enter and receive among themselves, of pure alms, eight marks sterling, to pray for my soul, and for the soul of the illustrious prince Richard, late duke of York, father of our lord the king, that is to say, that each of the said poor persons may enter, and receive thirteen shillings and four-pence, or more, if it can be done, yearly, for ever, to be paid in equal proportions, on the four usual quarterly days of payment, out of the rents, perquisites, and revenues arising from the said lands and tenements, and from all my lands and tenements, with their appertenances, in the said town of Reading, however arising and increasing.

And, my will is, that my executers obtain leave of our said lord the king, to hold the said tenements and lands in mortmain, to the intent that my will in the form expressed may be fulfilled.

And, if my executers, in default of payment of my debts aforesaid, cannot fulfil my will concerning the aforesaid lands and tenements, then, I will, that my said executers may sell the above-mentioned five alms-houses by me built, and all other my lands and tenements, and that my said executers may dispose of and distribute all the money arising from the sale thereof, in masses to be said for the poorest of the poor, and in other pious uses, and charitable works, according to the discretion of my aforesaid executers.

All the rest and residue of my effects, not hereby disposed of, when my debts are paid, and my will above-mentioned fulfilled, I will that they be disposed of for the good of my soul at the discretion of my executers, &c.

# Appendix C.

Extract from Mr. John Kendrick's will, as far as relates to the boroughs of Reading and Newbury.

IN the name of God, amen, the nine and twentieth day of December, anno Domini 1624, and in the two and twentieth year of the reign of our sovereign lord king James, &c. I, John Kendrick, of the city of London, draper, being sick in body, but of good and perfect memory, (for which I give most humble and hearty thanks to Almighty God) do make, ordain, and declare this my last will and testament, in manner and form following, that is to say—

First, and before all things, I commend and commit my soul to Almighty God, my creator, trusting most assuredly to be saved by the death, passion, and only merits, of Jesus Christ, my eaviour and redeemer:

And I will, that my body be decently interred, in christian burial, in the parish church of St. Christopher,\* where I dwell, as my executers herein after named shall order and appoint.

Item, I give and bequeath to three-score poor men, to every of them a gown of broad cloth, to wear on the day of my burial, and twelve pence a piece in money to pay for their dinners. The same poor men to be such as my executers shall appoint.

<sup>\*</sup>Towards the end of the last century, the church of St. Christopher was taken down by an agreement entered into between the patron, the rector of St. Christopher's, and the directors of the bank, under the sanction of an act of parliament, at which time the site of the church and church-yard was incorporated with the bank buildings, and the remains of Mr. Kendrick were removed from the vault in which they had first been deposited, and re-interred in the church of St. Margaret, Lothbury.

Item, I give and bequeath black gowns and cloaks, to be worn at my burial by my kindred, friends, and servants, as my executers shall think meet, not exceeding the sum of six hundred pounds in the said gowns and cloaks, and the rest of the charges of my funeral.

Item, I give and bequeath the sum of three-score pounds, to be bestowed upon a dinner, to be provided for my friends, and the inhabitants of the parish of St. Christopher, where I now dwell, upon the day of my burial, and in such place as my executers shall think meet and convenient.

Item, I give and bequeath to the mayor and burgesses of the town of Reading, in the county of Berkshire (I mean to the body corporate or corporation of the said town of Reading, by whatsoever name or addition the same is made known) the sum of seven thousand and five hundred pounds, upon especial trust, and confidence, that they shall therewith perform the uses following, that is to say,

The said mayor and burgesses shall buy, and purchase unto them and their successors, for ever, (I say to the body corporate of the said town of Reading, by whatsoever name or addition the same is made known) lands and hereditaments, of the clear value of fifty pounds, by the year, over and above all charges and reprises.\* Which sum of fifty pounds a year, my will and meaning is, shall be paid by the said mayor and burgesses, and their successors, unto my sister, Ann Newman, yearly, during her natural life; and, after her decease, the same yearly sum of fifty pounds, shall be paid by the said mayor and burgesses, and their successors, to the overseers of the poor of the said town of Reading for the time being, yearly, for ever; and, by them, the said overseers for the time being, shall be bestowed and distributed to and among the poor people of the said town, for ever, to wit, the moiety thereof every half year, in such sums, and to such persons, as the said overseers for the time being shall think meet, according to the necessity and desert of the same several persons.

Provided always, and my meaning is, that this my yearly gift shall not any way abridge the said poor of the ordinary allowances usually assessed and collected of the wealthier sort of the inhabitants of the said town, towards the relief of the said poor people, but shall be unto themas an additament, and clear increase of relief, yearly, for ever.

And, if this my gift and provision shall happen (which I trust it shall not) to be by the said mayor and burgesses, or by the said overseers for the time being, ordered and disposed, contrary to my meaning, thus declared: or that my will and desire above expressed, touching the bestowing and distribution of the said sum of fifty pounds, yearly, be omitted and neglected, or left unperformed, by the space of one whole year, after it is by this my will appointed to be distributed, and bestowed, as aforesaid, then my will and meaning is, that the said sum and revenue of fifty pounds a year, shall be by the said mayor and burgesses, and their successors for the time being, for ever, paid into the treasurer of Christ Hospital, and by the governors of the same hospital, employed and bestowed in the relief and education of the poor children of the said hospital, or else, that the said mayor and burgesses for the time being, shall, by their deed in law, convey and make over the lands and hereditaments of the said yearly value of fifty pounds, unto the mayor and commonalty, and citizens of the city of London, and their successors, for ever, unto the use of the said hospital, to be employed as aforesaid.

Provided always, that the said fifty pounds a year be yearly paid to my sister Ann Newman, during her natural life, and, after her decease, to the charitable uses aforesaid.

Moreover my will and meaning is, as also my trust and confidence in the said mayor and burgesses of the town of Reading, is, that with another competent part of the said sum of seven thousand five hundred pounds, so by me devised as aforesaid, they, the aforesaid mayor and burgesses, shall buy and purchase unto them, and their successors, for ever, a fair plot of ground,

<sup>\*</sup> North-street farm, in the parish of Tilehurst, was purchased with part of this money.

within the said town of Reading, or the liberties thereof, and thereupon shall erect and build a strong house of brick, fit and commodious for setting the poor to work therein; or else shall buy and purchase such an house being already built, if they can find one already fitting, or that may with a reasonable sum be made fit for the said use. The same house to have a garden adjoining, and to be from time to time kept in good and sufficient reparation, by the said mayor and burgesses for the time being, for ever. Which house and garden, my will is, shall be used, and occupied by such as the said mayor and burgesses, and their successors, from time to time, for ever, shall appoint, and ordain, for the employing and handling of the stock of money by me hereby left, and devised, to that purpose.

And my will and meaning is, that the said lands and hereditaments of the yearly value of fifty pounds, and also the said house and garden, being bought and purchased as aforesaid with parcel of the said sum of 7500 pounds, then the whole residue and remainder of the same 7500 pounds shall make, and be a common stock, to be employed and bestowed in trades of clothing, either in making coloured clothes or whites, as the times shall require, and also in working of wool, hemp, flax, iron, grinding of Brasil woods, and other stuffs for dying, or otherwise, as to the said mayor and burgesses aforesaid, and their successors, for ever, shall seem meet and convenient, for the employment of the poor people, and for the preservation and increase of the said common stock.

And, the said mayor and burgesses, and their successors, for ever, shall have the election, placing, and ordering, as also the displacing, if cause be, of all and every person and persons to be employed in the handling and husbanding of the common stock, in the house aforesaid, according to their, the said mayor and burgesses, good discretion, from time to time, for ever.

Wherein yet my desire is, that they shall prefer the poor of the said town to the said work and employment, before others of other places.

And, for the performance of these premises, my will is, that the sum of seven thousand and five hundred pounds, before, for this end, by me bequeathed to the said mayor and burgesses, and their successors, shall be paid unto them, or their successors, in manner and form following, that is to say, two thousand pounds thereof, at the end of one year next after my decease; other two thousand pounds thereof, at the end of two years next after the day of my decease, and the residue of the said whole sum, being three thousand and five hundred pounds, at the end of three years next ensuing, after and from the day of my decease.

But, if it should happen, as my trust is it will not, that the said mayor and burgesses, or their successors, shall neglect, omit, or fail to perform the premises, according to my will and meaning above declared: or shall misemploy the said stock, contrary to the true intent and meaning of this my devise, and disposition, for the good of the poor and their honest employment, and maintenance, as aforesaid, and that such their neglect shall continue at any time by the space of one whole year together, then my will and meaning is, that my said whole legacy of 7500% and every part and parcel thereof, shall be thenceforth utterly void, frustrate, and of none effect, as to, for, and concerning the said mayor and burgesses and their successors, and as to, for, and concerning the uses thereof before limited and expressed. And, that the said whole common stock shall be by them, the said mayor and burgesses, and their successors for the time being, forthwith paid unto the mayor and commonalty, and citizens of the city of London, to the use of Christ Hospital in London, according as I have above devised, and disposed, touching the revenue of fifty pounds a year for ever, bequeathed to the use and reliet of the poor people of the town of Reading.

As also my will and meaning is, that in this case of non performance by the said mayor and burgesses, the house and garden to be purchased in Reading, as aforesaid, shall be, by the said mayor and burgesses, and their successors, conveyed, and made over, by their deed

sufficient in law, unto the said mayor and commonalty, and citizens of the city of London, and their successors, for ever, to the like use of Christ Hospital in London aforesaid.

Item, I give and bequeath to the mayor, aldermen, and burgesses of the town of Newbury, in the county of Berks, I mean the body corporate of the said town, the sum of four thousand pounds, to buy and purchase therewith a commodious house and garden, within the same town, or the liberties thereof, to set the poor to work, and, with the residue of the same sum, to make a common stock for the employment of the poor in the said house, according to the good discretion of the said mayor, aldermen, and burgesses, from time to time, for ever, and according to my meaning before declared, in the devising of the sum of 7500 pounds to the mayor and burgesses of the town of Reading to the like use.

But my will and meaning is, that if it shall happen, which I trust will not, that the said mayor, aldermen, and burgesses of the town of Newbury, or their successors, shall neglect, or fail to perform my trust and meaning hereby committed unto them, or shall misemploy the said stock, contrary to my good intent to the poor before declared, by the space of one whole year, at any time after my said legacy shall be paid unto them, then my will and meaning is, that my said whole legacy of four thousand pounds, and every part and parcel thereof, shall thenceforth be utterly void, and of none effect, as, to, for, and concerning the mayor, aldermen, and burgesses of the town of Newbury, and their successors, for ever, and that the whole common stock be by them the said mayor, aldermen, and burgesses of Newbury, and their successors for the time being, forthwith paid over unto the mayor and burgesses of the town of Reading, in the same county, to be by them, and their successors, for ever, employed, bestowed, and used, in like manner as I have by this my will devised and appointed, on other stock common for the poor in the same town of Reading, as by my said devise and disposition (before herein more at large expressed) doth and may appear.

In like manner also, my will and meaning is, that in case of such non-performance of my will, and intent, by the said mayor, aldermen, and burgesses of the town of Newbury, the house and garden by them so to be purchased and built as aforesaid, shall be by the said mayor, aldermen, and burgesses of the town of Newbury, and their successors, conveyed and made over by their deed sufficient in law, unto the mayor and burgesses of the said town of Reading, and their successors, for ever, to be by them sold and converted into money, and the same money to be used and employed in their common stock, for the poor, in the said town of Reading aforesaid, in such sort as I have formerly hereby expressed.

And, for the performance of the said trust, and uses, by the said mayor, aldermen, and burgesses of the town of Newbury aforesaid, my will and meaning is, that the said sum of four thousand pounds, so to them bequeathed and devised as aforesaid, shall be paid unto them, or their successors, in manner following, that is to say, one thousand pounds thereof, at the end of one year next ensuing of the day of my decease; one other thousand pounds thereof, at the end of two years from and after my said decease; and the residue, being two thousand pounds, shall be paid them, at the end of three years next after my decease.

Item, I give and bequeath to be given and distributed to poor maids in the town of Reading, in the county of Berks, and at their several marriages, by forty shillings a-piece, at the discretion of the mayor and burgesses of that town, the sum of one hundred pounds, provided none enjoy the benefit thereof but such as have served master, mistress, or dame, by the space of seven years together. This hundred pounds to be paid to the said mayor and burgesses, for the use aforesaid, within one year next after my decease.

Item, I give and bequeath to the mayor, aldermen, and burgesses of the town of Newbury, in Berkshire, the sum of fifty pounds, to be by them bestowed and distributed to twenty-five maids on their several days of their weddings, in the same town. None to enjoy this gift

but such as have well and honestly served with one master, mistress, or dame, by the space of seven years at the least. And this fifty pounds to be paid to the said mayor, aldermen, and burgesses within one year after my decease.

Item, I give and bequeath towards the finishing of the pinnacles of the steeple of the parish church of St. Mary, in Reading, in Berkshire, fifty pounds, to be paid to the church-wardens of the same parish, within one month after the same pinnacles shall be finished.

Item, I give and bequeath, to the mayor and burgesses of the town of Reading aforesaid, the sum of five hundred pounds, to be first lent to these parties, and in the sums hereafter named, for seven years, gratis. That is, to James Winch, two hundred pounds; and to Walter Rye, Richard Stamp, and William Blacknall, clothiers, one hundred pounds a-piece, each of them giving bond, with two sufficient sureties, for repayment thereof to the said mayor and burgesses, at the end of the said seven years. And afterwards the same five hundred pounds shall be lent to ten several honest industrious poor clothiers, freemen of the same town, by fifty pounds a-piece, gratis, for three years, upon like good security, and no man to have the use of this money twice, but if there shall not be clothiers enow found in the same town to enjoy this loan in manner aforesaid, that then the said money shall be lent also unto other tradesmen, free of the said town, by the sums and terms of years last before appointed, to such as set most poor people to work, according to the discretion of the said mayor and burgesses. And this said sum of five hundred pounds shall be paid to the said mayor and burgesses, to the use aforesaid, at the end of one year next after my decease.

Item, I give and bequeath to the mayor, aldermen, and burgesses of the town of Newbury, in the county of Berks, the sum of five hundred pounds, to be lent first for the term of seven years gratis, unto these several clothiers here named, that is to say, to Thomas Newman, one hundred pounds; to Richard Avery, one hundred pounds; to Martin Broaker, fifty pounds; to William Goodwin the elder, fifty pounds; to Timothy Avery, fifty pounds; to Robert Bacon, fifty pounds; and to Griffin Forster, fifty pounds. Every of the said several parties entering into bond, with two sufficient sureties, for repayment of the said sums to the said mayor, aldermen, and burgesses at the end of seven years. And afterwards, the same five hundred pounds shall be lent to ten several industrious poor clothiers, free of the said town of Newbury, by fifty pounds a-piece, gratis, for three years. And after that, in like manner, from three years to three years, for ever, and no man to have the same money twice. But if there shall not be clothiers enow, found in the same town of Newbury, to enjoy this loan, in manner as aforesaid, then the same money shall be lent also unto other tradesmen, free of the same town, by the sums and terms of years last before appointed, to such as set most poor people to work, according to the discretion of the said mayor, aldermen, and burgesses, to whom this said five hundred pounds shall be paid, to the use aforesaid, at the end of one year after my decease.

Item, I give and bequeath to the mayor and burgesses of the town of Reading, in the county of Berks, the sum of two hundred and fifty pounds, to be paid them at the end of one year next after my decease. Therewith to purchase land and hereditaments, to the clear yearly value of ten pounds, for ever, to maintain divine service to be said in the parish church of St. Mary in that town, by the parson or his curate, every morning of the week, at six of the clock, for ever.

Item, I give and bequeath to the mayor, aldermen, and burgesses of the town of Newbury, in the county of Berks, the sum of two hundred and fifty pounds, to be paid them at the end of one year next after my decease, therewith to purchase lands, or hereditaments, of the clear yearly value of ten pounds, for ever, to maintain divine service, to be said in the parish church of that town, by the parson or his curate, every morning of the week, at six of the clock, to continue for ever, &c.

### Appendix D.

Copy of an indenture concerning sir T. White's gift to the town of Reading.

MEMORANDUM.

THAT in an indenture, tripartite, made the first day of July 1566, and the eighth of queen Elizabeth, between the mayor, burgesses and commonalty of the city of Bristol on the one part, and the president and scholars of St. John, the baptist's college, founded in the university of Oxford, by sir Thomas White, knt. and alderman of the city of London, on the second part. and the master and wardens of the merchant taylors of the fraternity of St. John, the baptist, in the city of London, on the third part. Among other things is contained as follows. AND FURTHER, the said mayor, burgesses, and commonalty of the city of Bristol, do grant and consent, with the said sir Thomas White, knt. that they, or their successors, shall, on the feast day of St. Bartholomew, the apostle, which shall be in the year of our Lord 1579, at the common hall of merchant taylors in London, between the hours of two and six of the clock in the afternoon, pay the mayor and burgesses of the town of Reading the sum of one hundred and four pounds, on condition that they shall at the feast of St. Michael, next after the receipt of the said sum, pay, or cause to be paid, to four poor young men of the said town of Reading. of honest name and fame, occupiers or inhabitants within the said town, and freemen of the same, and clothiers to be preferred above all others, to be named and appointed by the mid mayor and burgesses for the time being, the sum of one hundred pounds of lawful money of England, that is to say, to every of them twenty-five pounds, to have and to occupy the same for the term of ten years next following, without paying any thing for the loan of the same, so as they dwell within the said town or the suburbs of the same, they and every of them finding sufficient surety or pawn for the repayment of the same, at the end of the said ten years.

To the intent and upon condition that the mayor, burgesses, and chamberlain, or other head officers of the town of Reading, or their assigns, upon the receipt of the said one hundred pounds, shall deliver the said sum on the feast of St. Michael, the archangel, to four other poor young men, of good fame and name, of the said town of Reading, to be named and appointed, as aforesaid, to every of them twenty-five pounds, to hold the same for ten years next ensuing the receipt thereof, finding sufficient security or pawn for the same, for the true repayment thereof without paying any thing for the loan thereof; and, at the end of every ten years, the said sum of one hundred pounds to be delivered to four other young men, in manner and form as aforesaid, for ever, provided that none of the young men that have once had the benefit of occupying thereof shall be admitted to have it any more.

And further it is agreed, between the said parties, that the said four pounds, residue of the one hundred and four pounds, shall be employed, after the receipt thereof by the said mayor and burgesses, as by them shall be thought good, for their pains to be taken in and about the receipt and payment of the said one hundred pounds.

And the said parties to these indentures do further agree, that the said mayor, burgesses, and commonalty of the city of Bristol (after the sum above mentioned in form aforesaid delivered and paid) shall, yearly, on the feast day of St. Battholomew, the apostle, in the common hall of the said merchant taylors, in London, between the hours aforesaid, from year to year, from henceforth, for ever, deliver and pay to every of the cities, companies, and towns, before in these indentures named and placed, beginning first with the said city of Bristol, then the said city of York, and to the mayor and commonalty, or other head officer, of every the said cities, companies, and towns, or to their sufficiently authorised factors and attornics, under their common seal, the sum of one hundred and four pounds, of the reats, profits, and issues

of the said lands, yearly arising of the same, for the intent that the mayors and other head officers, shall, on the feast of St. Michael, the archangel, next, after the receipt thereof, pay the said sum of one hundred pounds, to four other poor young men, in manner as aforesaid, for ever.

And further it is agreed, that if the said mayor, burgesses, and commonalty of the city of Bristol do make default of payment of the said sum of one hundred and four pounds, to any of the said cities or towns above named, at the days, time, and place thereof above limited, in part or in all, contrary to the form aforesaid, that then the said mayor, burgesses, and commonalty of Bristol, and their successors, shall forfeit, loose, and pay to the said president and scholars, and to their successors, the several fines, rates, and penalties ensuing. That is to say, for the first time of non-payment of the said one hundred and four pounds, to any of the said cities, companies, or towns, as it shall be due, to forfeit one hundred and ten pounds: for the second time of the like forfeiture, one hundred and fifteen pounds: and the third time to forfeit one hundred and twenty pounds: and for the fourth time one hundred and thirty pounds; and the fifth time one hundred and forty pounds; and the sixth time one hundred and fifty pounds, provided always, that if the said lands or premises, as before specified, be notoriously decayed, by any sudden misfortune, by reason of fire, or other like occasion, or be lawfully evicted by order of law, and taken from the possession of the said mayor, burgesses, and commonalty of Bristol, without fraud or covyn, and not being by the will, negligence, or sufferance, of the said mayor, burgesses, and commonalty, whereby upon declaration of accompt thereof made, and certified, upon the oaths of four aldermen of the city of Bristol, of all the said decays, to the president and vice president, and two of the ancient fellows of the said college of St. John, the baptist, in the university of Oxford, for the time being, and to the mayor of the city of Gloucester aforesaid, and one of the aldermen of the same, so as it shall and may truly appear to the said persons, that the rents, perquisites, revenues, and issues of the lands, tenements, and hereditaments purchased, and to be purchased, by the mayor, burgesses, and commonalty of the city of Bristol aforesaid, shall not be sufficient to bear the charges before and hereafter mentioned, the said payment to cease, and not to be paid until such decay be reformed, and amended, any thing in the indenture before-mentioned to the contrary thereof. notwithstanding.

Provided always, and it is by these presents fully agreed and granted, between the said parties, that within the term of twenty years next after the date hereof, two discreet and honest persons, one on and for the said town of Bristol, to be nominated, chosen, and appointed by the mayor, burgesses, and commonalty; the other of and for the said college, to be chosen by the president and fellows of the said college, to ride, and to view, at the equal and indifferent costs and charges of the said mayor, burgesses, and commonalty, and the said president and fellows aforesaid, which shall ride and travel unto all and every of the said cities and towns afore-named, to the intent to know, and shall duly enquire, know, and search, whether the disbursions aforesaid be duly paid, delivered, used, ordered, and continued, within every of the said cities, companies, and towns, as it ought to be, according to the true meaning of the said sir Thomas White, and according to the articles and covenants herein-before mentioned, and declared.

And, such of the said cities and towns as they shall, upon due proof, find negligent in the performance hereof, to have the same one hundred and four pounds no more everafter that, but, the said disbursion of money shall be delivered to some other town, company, or city, as the said mayor, burgesses, and commonalty of the city of Bristol, and the president and fellows of St. John's college, at Oxford, shall deem meet and convenient, in manner aforesaid.

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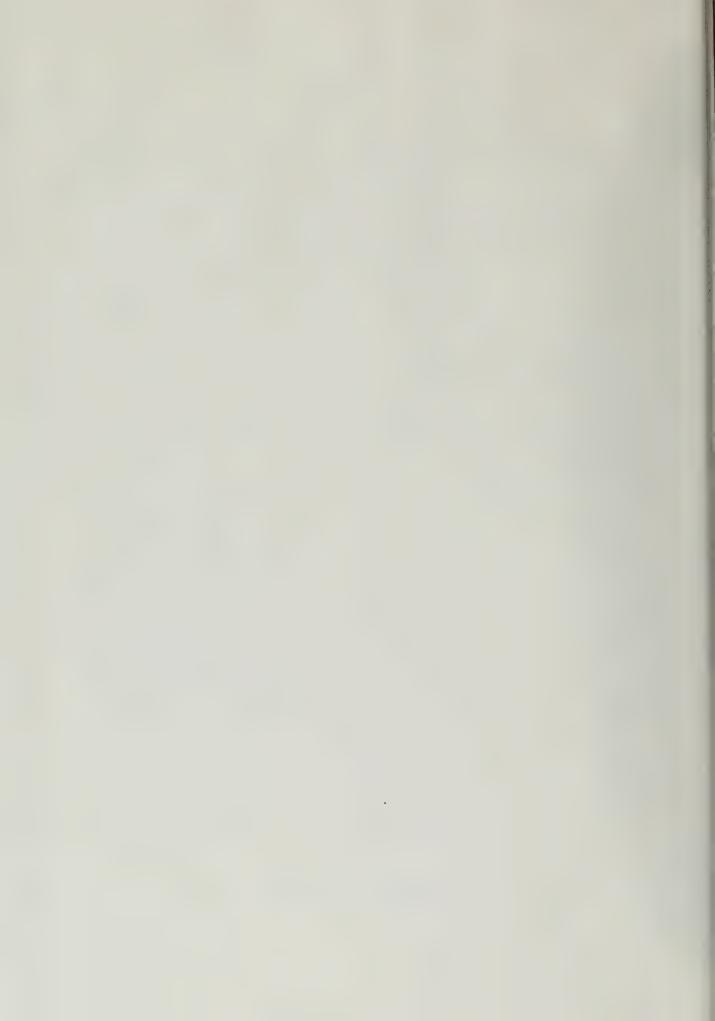
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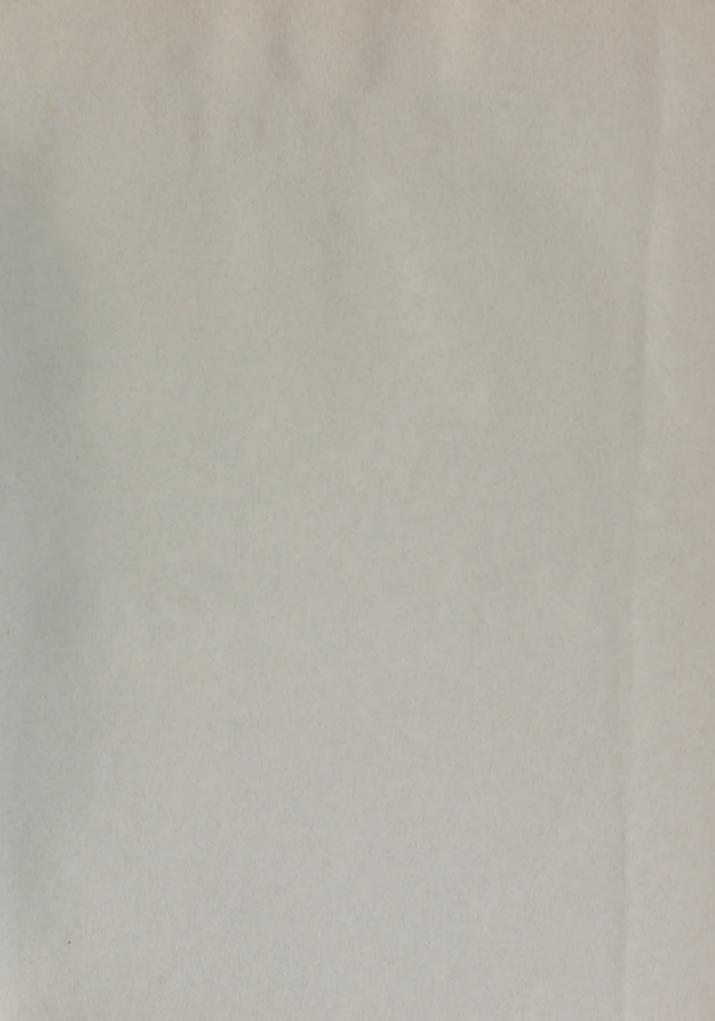
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